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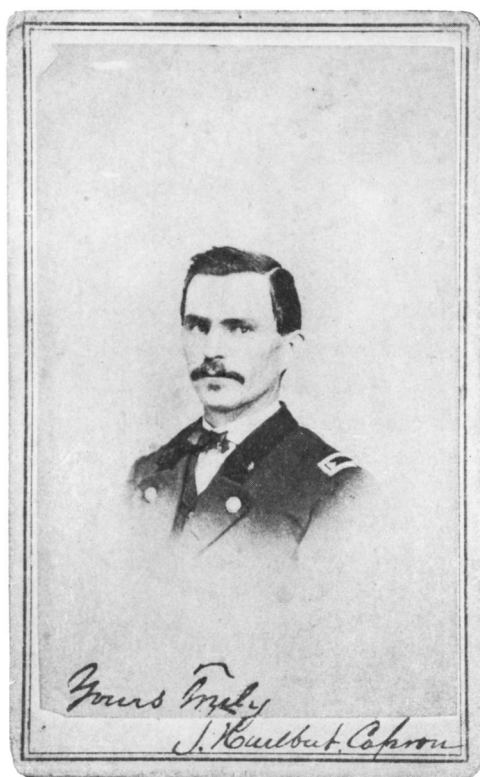
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WAR DIARY OF THADDEUS H. CAPRON, 1861-1865.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN BY MAJOR THADDEUS H. CAPRON FROM SEPTEMBER, 1861, TO AUGUST, 1865, TO HIS FATHER, MOTHER, BROTHER AND SISTERS, DURING HIS SERVICE IN THE FIFTY-FIFTH ILLINOIS INFANTRY VOLUNTEER REGIMENT IN THE CIVIL WAR.

FIFTY-FIFTH INFANTRY, WINNEBAGO COUNTY.

The Fifty-fifth Infantry Illinois Volunteers was organized, at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Ill., and mustered into the United States service, Oct. 31, 1861. It was the first completely organized regiment to march out from the gates of the new Camp Douglas which it had helped create. Dec. 9th left Camp Douglas for Alton, Ill.; the 19th left for St. Louis by steamer; Jan. 12, 1862, ordered to Paducah, Ky., by boat; March 8th embarked on steamer for Tennessee River and moved down to Pittsburg Landing, and was soon in camp, east of Shiloh church—the Fifty-fifth being on the left of the Union lines. The opening of the battle, Sunday morning, found the regiment in position, with an effective force of 873 men. Colonel Stuart was wounded and nine of the line officers three of whom died of wounds. 102 enlisted men were killed and mortally wounded, and 161 wounded and taken prisoners. The regiment was with the army in advance on Corinth, and at Russell's house, May 17th, lost in skirmish 8 men, two killed and six wounded. Entered Corinth May 30th, then westward along Memphis and Charleston Railroad. With Sherman's Division marched into Memphis July 21st, and remained, doing camp duty until Nov. 25th, when it marched with Sherman's Division for the Tallahatchie River. Was marched back to Memphis, to descend the



T. Hurlbut Capron

Mississippi River to Vicksburg. Embarked with the expedition, and six companies were engaged in the battle of Chickasaw Bayou, Dec. 29th, losing one captain killed and seven wounded. Was present under fire at battle of Arkansas Post, Jan. 10 and 11, 1863. Moved from Arkansas Post to Young's Point, La., May 16, 1863; joined army in rear of Vicksburg, and on 17th was under fire at Champion Hills. Participated in the assaults of 19th and 22nd of May, losing Lieut. Levi Hill of Company A, killed; Colonel Malmberg and 2 line officers wounded and 4 enlisted men killed and 33 wounded. During the siege, the regiment lost 1 man killed and 33 wounded. Was present at the surrender July 4th. July 5th marched with Sherman's expedition from Jackson, Miss. Participated in the siege, and lost 1 officer wounded, 1 enlisted man killed and 1 wounded. Embarked at Vicksburg for Memphis and moved out with the army, past Corinth, to Iuka. On Oct. 30th, 1863, marched from East Point on the Tennessee River for Chattanooga. November 25th, marched with Sherman to the relief of Knoxville, East Tenn. Returned and encamped at Bridgeport during the winter, and at Larkin's Landing in the spring, at which place the regiment veteranized, and returned to Illinois on furlough for thirty days. June 27, 1864, participated in assault on Kenesaw Mountain, Georgia, led by Capt. Augustine, who was killed on the field. Loss of regiment was 2 officers killed and 3 wounded, 13 enlisted men killed and 30 wounded. July 22, the regiment was again engaged with an effective force of 239 men, commanded by Capt. F. H. Shaw, and came out of engagement with 180 men—1 officer killed, 3 enlisted men killed, 12 wounded and 17 taken prisoners. In the siege of Atlanta, the regiment lost 1 officer and 6 enlisted men killed and 18 wounded. Aug. 31, 1864, in battle of Jonesboro, Georgia, lost 23 men. In a short campaign of but little over two months, the regiment lost about one-half its number. Joined in pursuit of Hood, through northern Alabama, and returned to Atlanta, Ga., where 162 non-veterans were discharged. The regiment lost near Bentonville, N. C., 1 man killed, 1 wounded and 6 taken

prisoners. Marched with army by way of Richmond to Washington. Participated in the grand review at Washington. Then moved to Louisville, Ky. Remained in camp but a few weeks, when moved by steamer to Little Rock, Ark., where it remained until Aug. 14, 1865, when it was mustered out of service. Left for Chicago, Ill., Aug. 19, and arrived Aug. 22, 1865, where it received final payment and discharge. During its term of service, the regiment moved 3,374 miles.

Quarter Master Thaddeus H. Capron entered as private Co. "C", Sept. 9, 1861. Promoted Quarter Master Sergeant. Promoted Second Lieutenant Co. "C", Sept. 4, 1862. Promoted Major, Quartermaster's Department, June, 1865.

Thaddeus H. Capron was in the battle of Shiloh, Russell House, Corinth, Holly Springs, Chickasaw Bayou, Arkansas Post, Champion Hills, the siege of Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Dallas, Resacca, Kenesaw Mountain, near Atlanta, Jonesboro, etc.

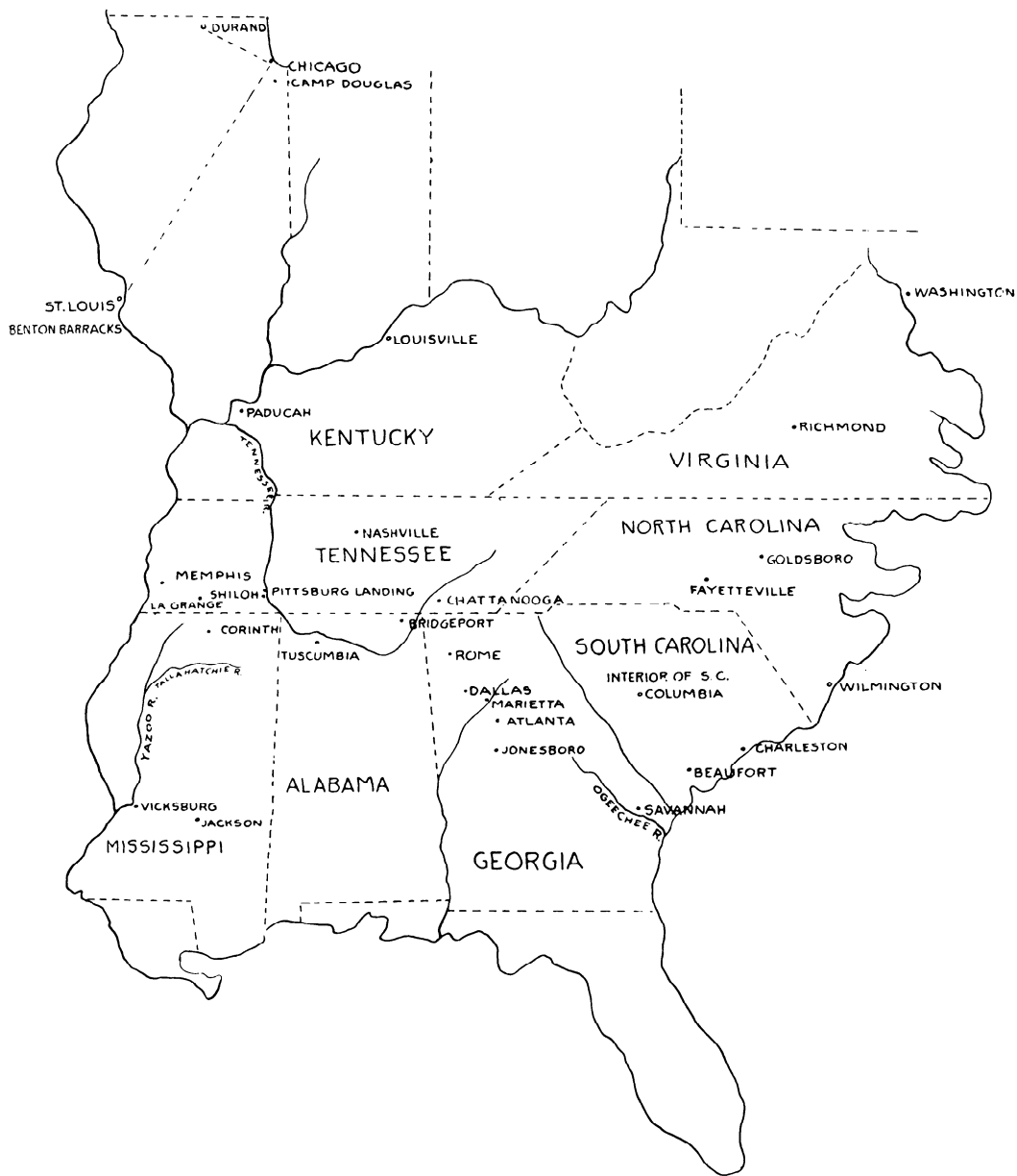
In one of his letters he writes as follows: "I have not in nearly three years missed a single march and have been in my place during every fight."

The first letter was written at Camp Douglas, which was near Chicago. The city has extended far beyond this place. The regiments were here filled up, and prepared for the field.

THE DIARY

"Camp Douglas, Sept. 15th, 1861.

We left Rockford on Monday morning and arrived here about one o'clock in the afternoon having a nice ride and a jolly good time. We have a splendid camping ground, and everything here is much better than I expected. I like the *business* very well. Our captain can't be beat. Every man in the company thinks him just right. He looks well to our interest and is a boy among us when off from drill. The boys here are all in first rate spirits. You could not get one of our boys to go back home to stay. Our company is filling up slowly, but we think



Capron Map

we shall not leave here in less time than four to six weeks. If we get filled soon we shall get the highest honors of the regiment, which we are bound to have."

"September 23d.

I hope you may have very pleasant times while I am absent. I hope I may return to you after serving three years in my country's service, or less, and may I do my duty and live to see my dear friends at home. I am now in the commissary department, and think I shall receive the appointment of Assistant Commissary Sergeant, which is one of the best lower offices in the Regiment. Its pay is \$21 a month and rations. Captain thinks he will procure the appointment. I like the business first rate. I never felt better. The boys here all seem to enjoy themselves well. None are homesick. Some of us receive letters from home daily, so that we know what is going on there. It does us much good to receive letters from home."

October 8th he had just returned from a visit home. As to leaving for St. Louis, he did not know any more about it than before. They might go in a week, or it might be later.

"October 23rd, 1861.

Charlie Johnson returned today, and he states that you refuse to write until you hear from me. The reason for my not writing is that we have been very busily engaged making out our monthly report of provisions received and disbursed, which took several days, and yesterday we moved our camp ground, so that I have been very busy. Uncle Joseph was up to see us last week, stayed a couple of hours and took supper with us. We have had a number of visits from friends. Last Monday, Deacon Webster and Greg. Stewart called on us, and yesterday Mr. Ashton, and today 'Squire Wilcoxon and Theron took dinner with us. We have now a very pleasant and well arranged camping ground. Our barracks are as good as they possibly can be, we have a good dining room attached to our barracks, and soon shall have a large nice *cook stove*. Then we shall get along finely."

He says that he is sorry that Deak Webster and George Walker failed to pass the examination necessary to enlist.

“October 27th.

Our new camping ground is not quite as pleasant as the other, yet our accommodations are a great deal better. We have a good sleeping apartment, also an excellent dining room, so that in rainy weather we do not have to eat, drink, and be merry in the rain. You think we were not merry while eating in the rain, but it is fine sport. Just try it. The boys are the best drilled and best appearing company on the ground, at least, so says the Major and Adjutant. They give our company this compliment, and this is a great deal where there are a thousand men. [At this time he was not on duty with his company.] I have been in the best of health, and am still inclined that way. I tell you what it is, the soldier's life is the life for me. It has a fascination which no one after they have had any experience wishes to give up. To be sure it has its hardships, but its pleasures are the greater after going through the hardships. The boys are in good spirits and are becoming fleshy from the ‘hard fare.’ My morning duties are to deliver provisions which consist of about 800 lbs. of beef, 300 pork, 950 loaves of bread and one barrel of sugar, etc. It keeps me busy to see that all have their regular rations, but I will do it, and ‘where there is a will, there is a way.’ How are you getting along in your school this winter? You ask me about the rule you have adopted—I think it a fine thing in almost every case. You can soon tell what cases it will not work with, and adopt some other plan for them.”

“November 9th, 1861.

Our regiment now numbers 984 men and we expect fifty more the first of next week. We have received all the equipage here in the department, so I think we must move very soon. I shall be glad when we do move, for then we will have some excitement—have the pleasure of seeing a few *Secesh*. The election of the regiment took place last week and resulted in the election of Stuart as Colonel. He is just the man we all wanted.

I have not heard from any young lady in the village yet. (I mean aside from home.) I think they must care a great deal about our leaving.

They show a good deal of confidence in our company by assigning it to the position of 'Color Company'—that is the flag protector."

"November 10th, 1861.

Yesterday the boys all expected their pay, but it did not come, and today there are quite a number of long faces. When we shall move, it is impossible to tell, but in all probability it will not be long. I for one will be glad when we do, for I would like to get down into *Seceshdom* as soon as convenient, and help to clean them out. Won't we have gay times, though?

The company left for Benton Barracks, St. Louis, Mo., the middle of December. He writes:

Dear Friends:

"Camp Benton, Jan. 5, 1862.

I received your welcome letter a few days since, and you do not know with what pleasure I perused its pages. I had been looking for several days for a letter from home, but no such missive came until it was least expected. I had not received a letter for nearly a week, and had begun to think that my friends had nearly forgotten me. Things are with us just about as they have been. The weather is warm and quite agreeable. We have plenty of coal, and stoves to burn it in, so that I don't think we shall suffer if cold weather should come.

When we shall leave, or where we shall go, it is impossible to tell. I hope we will receive our pay this week as many in our regiment are entirely out of the 'where-with-all.' I think if I receive all my extra duty pay that I shall be able to send home for deposit, about fifty dollars, and perhaps more. The government now owes me about seventy dollars. I mean to save as much as I possibly can. I have had some talk with the Post Commissary about my being detached from my regiment and

staying here in the commissary, but whether I shall or not, I cannot at present tell. As regards being very sickly at this place, I do not think it is, for in this encampment there is an average of not over two a day of burials, and we have about 15,000 troops here. If at the next teacher's association they have a paper, please try and send it to me, as I should be very glad to read it. Anything from home is very acceptable."

"January 10th, 1862.

Should any of us fall we do so in a good cause, but then we will not imagine that these things will happen, for there is a prospect that we shall see but little fighting unless England declares war, then we will fight as fought those of '76 times."

"Paducah, Ky., January 24th, 1862.

On the 13th we left Camp Benton, and we are here in the midst of Secesh, and have to keep good watch of the enemy. Today we finished pitching our tents, and tonight are going to try our utmost to have some sleep—this is what we most need. I have not been sick a day yet, and have been subjected to a good deal of exposure. Some thirty of our regiment were taken sick on the trip. About fifty were left at St. Louis. I am too tired to write. Will write you a long letter giving a history of the trip."

"January 25th, 1862.

In my last letter I made you a promise that I would give you a sketch of our trip from St. Louis. On Monday, the 13th inst., we left Camp Benton. Marched down to St. Louis where we arrived at 1 o'clock, then we embarked on the steamboat, and about three o'clock left the city on our way down the river, whither, we knew not, but supposed to Cairo. The ice was floating in the river so thickly that it was almost impossible to force our way through. When I retired for the night we had made considerable progress. The farther we run down the river the thicker was the ice, and we were under the necessity of going very slowly. Tuesday we only made about fifty miles. The scenery along the river in some places is grand. About

eleven o'clock at night we were running along quite briskly when all at once the boat ceased to move. She had run aground, and the next thing on the program was to get off. The boatmen used their spars to the best of their ability for about three hours, and then thought it best to await daylight before trying any more. Daylight found us in the same old place and the mate and deck hands hard at work with the spars. They kept it up all day, and finally said that there was no possible chance for us to get off while the boat was so heavily loaded. We were now in a *fine situation* in about the center of the river, and no way of landing, except with a small boat. What to do no one knew. The weather was quite cold and the men were beginning to grumble in no small degree about the quarters, for many of them were out on deck and had nothing but their blankets to keep them warm.

Thursday morning, still aground and no possibility of getting off. Messengers who were sent to Cape Girardeau for assistance have returned, and state that it is impossible for a boat to come up the river on account of the ice and low water, and also say that they have two thousand rations coming by land, so that we might in some way land and have provisions to last during a march. An idea finally popped into the Colonel's head. There was a steamer lying on the Illinois shore about a mile below us and he thought he would go and order this boat to our assistance. He found it to be the Memphis, laying up for the winter. A short time after the Colonel arrived there, we saw the smoke begin to ascend from the smokestack, and it seemed to impart new life to every man. She arrived at our side about eight o'clock p. m., and during the night the men were all transferred to the Memphis, so that early in the morning they might apply all the power of both engines to extricate the January from her muddy nest. Friday morning we began in good season to try to get our boat loose, but could not start it *one peg*. What now is to be done, all inquire. It was finally decided upon to cross over to the Illinois side and march to the

railroad, some 18 miles distant. We crossed over, but when we came to land it was found impossible to get our baggage along, as the mud on the Illinois side was from six to twenty inches deep for about five miles from the shore. The Colonel concluded to go back and land on the Missouri side and stop, which we did, all being nearly discouraged. The weather had become much warmer and all went in for a good night's sleep. Saturday morning we issued rations and the men cooked them. This took all day, as they had issued to them about three hundred pounds of meat to each company. This was to last them four days. They also had bread, coffee, sugar, etc., in proportion. We had a scene that made us think of home. One of our comrades had been called from us to another world, and we were under the painful necessity of having to bury him here in this desolate place. He has done his work, and served his country.

Sunday. All is confusion and bustle here. No one would know it is a day of rest, if they were to look upon us. The January has at length loosened herself and will soon be up at our side. About twelve o'clock the work of loading began, and at eight part of the boys were transferred to her, and the balance remained on board the Memphis. Monday morning, boys all on board ready to start for Cairo."

They arrived at Cairo Wednesday, and saw the gunboats there. The Colonel went to Grant's headquarters and found they were to go to Paducah at which place they arrived Thursday morning. However, before arriving at Cairo they had to disembark several times, and walk past the sandbars."

"Paducah, Jan. 31st, 1862.

Our camping ground is quite good but it is very muddy. The weather here is quite mild, and it freezes but little nights, and this little soon thaws during the day. The first night that we were here I slept soundly all night, though the others in the tent were obliged to arise. The water had come into the tent three inches deep all over with the exception of one place which

was a little higher than the rest, and this was the place that thy humble servant was fortunate enough to have.

Mother what do you think of your rheumatic son? No cold did I take either. I am sorry for one thing, and this is that friend *Arden* has been obliged to again go to the hospital. The wet ground had made him much worse and today he went to the hospital where he will receive the best of care.

I can tell what is the trouble with — like a book (do not say anything about it) it is *genuine homesickness*, and I think that a furlough would improve his health much. I am beginning to think that I am quite tough, and can endure a great many hardships and privations. One thing I meant to say, we *now* have good floors and stoves in our tents."

"Paducah, Feb. 9th, 1862.

The boys are getting along finely. The health of the company is much better than at Camp Benton. The boys enjoy living in tents—*tip top*. It is much healthier than in barracks. Our company have six tents of the Sibley pattern, which makes plenty of room for all.

I must tell you we have just the gayest tent that there is in the regiment. The 'Orderly,' Snooks, myself, and three others occupy it. We have a little stove, nice bunks on which to sleep, and a good table and bench; and behold, this is not all for we have a splendid carpet on our floor—not Brussels, but seaweed which I *jayhawked*, and it serves a good purpose. Billy is the life of our squad, original in wit, pointed in remarks, and a capital good fellow. We have only four in hospital now. I was at the hospital today, it is the court house. It is a fine building, capable of accommodating about 400 patients. There are now in it about 300. The nursing of the sick is under the charge of the Sisters of Charity, and a blessing they are to the sick. May they prosper, and be rewarded for their kindness. I am enjoying myself well, and have work just hard enough to keep me out of mischief. We were in hopes that we might be permitted to accompany the expedition that has taken Fort Henry.

It is situated east of us about fifty miles on the Tennessee river, and is a point of no little importance. Where a rebel flag was floating but a few days since, now floats the 'stars and stripes, and long may they wave, not only over Fort Henry but soon over Columbus. We are in hopes we may be permitted to help in the capture of this stronghold. I think we *may* have the pleasure of returning home in the course of six months, but perhaps not, time will tell. We may fall by the bullet or by sickness, or we may return to our homes. In either case we must be resigned, for we are in the defense of right, and it will prevail."

"February 20th, 1862.

I see by the Chicago Tribune that *our* regiment was in the expedition that left Cairo, and here, a few days since, but *we* knew nothing of it. I think the Tribune meant our *good wishes*. All of our regiment would have been glad to go. We have been expecting an attack for some time and we had a good joke on our sutler last night. Some one told him that Beauregard was within twenty miles of us yesterday at two o'clock, and on the *double quick*. He was almost frightened to death.

Today there is a squad out, of our company, detailed to bury one poor soldier. He died here in the hospital yesterday of wounds received at the taking of Fort Donaldson."

"February 25th, 1862.

We had hoped to leave this place soon, but I do not know but we are doomed to stay here the time of our enlistment. Our squad have for the last week enjoyed their buckwheat cakes to a dead certainty. Have them every morning for breakfast. Our eatables here are good, and plenty of them. Our troops are doing nobly. Nashville is ours, and the rebels are leaving Columbus. Many here think they will make a desperate stand soon, but I don't know where they will do it. Buell and Grant are both pressing them hard from this direction, Burnside and Butler are doing good work on the other, and where are they

going? My opinion is that this war will be closed in less than six months from this time."

"Paducah, March 6th, 1862.

We expect soon to leave this place for either Columbus or Alabama, following up the Tennessee river. We are now brigaded, and our Colonel is acting brigadier general. Our quarter master is brigade Q. M., and my old *boss* is promoted to Q. M. This left a vacancy in this department which they have had the audacity to appoint *me* to fill, which I am now doing, and all seem to think that I make it go well. My health still continues to be good and the boys are well."

"March 10th, 1862.

We are now sailing up the Tennessee river on our way to Florence, Alabama, where we are in hopes of having a good '*brush*.' There are about sixty thousand troops with us and probably others will join us soon. We are the advance force. There are four Brig. Generals—Smith, Sherman, McClernand and *Stuart*, and Maj. Gen. Grant. I think we are well officered, and we will fight if we have a show. Promotions have been made, and Co. C shares largely. Sergeants Keyes, Hodges, and Fisher are promoted to lieutenants, and myself to commissary. I have had good success so far in my duties, have had everything done up in time. All seem to be satisfied with the rations, and it does me good I assure you. We are now stopping a short time at the bridge that was burned a few days since. It seems almost a pity that it was burned, but it seemed to be the best way of cutting off the supplies of the rebels. On Monday, a week tomorrow, our company left Paducah for Columbus, where they were one night and day, and then returned with all kinds of trophies. The boys say the fight was worth at least ten dollars. I know from their description that I would have been willing to give that amount had I been permitted to go. It was a very strongly fortified place. Soon we will be in the field and each one will have an opportunity of showing his bravery and patriotism. There may be some that will show themselves lack-

ing when the time comes, but I think them very few in our regiment. I hope that I may not be one of them, but *time* will tell. This may be the last letter, but I think not. Our second lieutenant has been promoted to captain; a nice little jump. I was agreeably surprised the other day when the quarter master brought up a nice little sorrel pony all equipped, and said that it was for *me*. Do you think that my rheumatic hip will now suffer? I have not felt it at all but once, and that lasted only one night. I think that if I get out of the service, I will be entirely cured of the rheumatism. I had the pleasure this morning of seeing Ft. Henry. It has a good command of the river, and is quite strongly fortified. The scenery along the Tennessee river is quite fine."

"Steamer Hannibal, Tennessee River, March 11, 1862.

We are now in the land of cotton without the least doubt. Our expedition left Cairo and Paducah the 9th, and proceeded up the Tennessee in fine style. This is one of the largest expeditions that has as yet left for the rebel domain. Its force is estimated at not far from 100,000 men. It is under the command of Gen. Smith. This morning our brigade left the steamer to make a reconnoitre and take possession of a railroad about 18 miles distant. Several brigades were with it. I was not very well and received orders to remain and see to the stores and baggage. The fleet as it advances up the river is a grand sight, filled to overflowing with soldiers of the northwest. At every place the expedition is met with cheers from *many*. We stopped at Savannah two days. This is a very pretty little place situated on the river about thirty miles from the Alabama line. We have been within three miles of the state of Mississippi. Pretty well south, is it not? While at Savannah I rode on horseback out into the country and had a good time. I saw several fields of *cotton*."

"In Camp, March 23rd, 1862.

Our camp is very pleasantly located on the south side of a gentle slope in a planter's peach orchard. Near by are several springs. We are only about fifteen miles from Corinth where

there is supposed to be a large rebel force. Our force now numbers 100,000 troops and we expect 50,000 men before making an advance. Gen. Buell's command is said to be about thirty miles from us, and numbers 125,000, and nearly all are western troops. Is not this beginning to look as though there was something to be done? That this rebellion will soon be put down, there can be no question of doubt, for we have now driven them to the Gulf States. Little did I think one year ago, that instead of singing, 'I Wish I Was in the Land of Cotton,' that I should be here, but so it is. Cotton fields are quite numerous.

My ague I have about cured, and hope soon to finish it. A letter from home will do me more good than the largest dose of medicine ever yet given. Please write often."

"In Camp, Pittsburgh, March 26th, 1862.

I have been quite sick for several days but am a little better now. Have been on duty most of the time. I hope the next letter I write you will contain a little news in regard to progress. It is supposed that Corinth will soon be ours. The rebels are only about 18 miles from us. Pretty near the enemy, are we not?"

"April 1st, 1862.

Camp life is dull and monotonous without a little prospect of doing work. All the boys from the village are well and in good spirits. Your kind advice I will try and profit by, for in an army we have everything to contend with, and advice from a dear parent is very acceptable."

"Pittsburg, April 10th, 1862.

My Dear Friends: This morning I wrote you a few lines in haste, but now I will endeavor to give you an account of the recent bloody battle that was fought at this place on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, the 6th, 7th, and 8th inst. Sunday morning we arose at reveille, as usual, and went on with our camp duties. We were preparing for inspection, which we

always have on Sabbath morning, when we were suddenly startled by the sound of musketry on our right. The first impression was that it was the pickets discharging their pieces, but ere many minutes elapsed the 'Long Roll' beat, and in two minutes from that time our regiment had formed in line of battle and were ready for action. It was marched about eighty rods from our camp, when they again formed a line of battle and awaited the approach of the enemy, lying on the ground just over the hill near our camp here. We waited about two hours, when they marched upon us with a force, said by their own men to have been 5,000 strong, and two batteries. Our brigade numbering only about 1,100 men, held this force for nearly three hours, and harder fighting never has been done than was done by our regiment and the — Ohio. Many fell, either wounded or killed. After three hours our brigade was nearly out of ammunition, and had to retreat, which they did in good order, to a distance of about eighty rods where they again rallied. The rebels again advanced and our brave boys had to again retreat, but they did it in good order and at every little distance would give them a volley. By our retreating the rebels were gaining ground, and had driven us nearly to the river, and when about one-half a mile from it, our whole force made a grand stand and supported the batteries, which played upon the enemy with such rapidity and precision that they were obliged to retreat. At about 7 o'clock the firing ceased for the night, with the exception of the heavy siege guns and those of the gunboat which kept up a fire once in fifteen minutes, throwing shell, which was disastrous to the rebels and prevented them from planting batteries. About six o'clock Buell's force commenced crossing the river to our assistance, and by 9 o'clock the next morning his force of 70,000 had landed.

On Monday morning about eight o'clock the fighting again commenced. Our boys, with the reinforcements, fought with new courage. In the morning our brigade was kept as a reserve for about an hour, but were soon ordered to the right of the line and there they again fought almost as hard as they did on Sun-

day, although there was, as it were, but a handful left. It is impossible to tell anywhere near all the details of this the greatest fight of the war.

Our brigade, by making such a brave stand of three hours on the *left* of the whole line of battle prevented the enemy from getting in our rear. Many of our dear boys fell. Many familiar faces will we see no more in our regiment. We have forty-six killed, one hundred and ninety-one wounded, and forty missing. This out of six hundred men engaged in the action. The balance of our regiment were sick.

Nearly one-half was either killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. Durand need *never* be ashamed of her boys. Company C went into action with 60 men, and has 11 killed, 22 wounded, and 4 missing. My feelings, I cannot describe in a letter, but will when I see you, if I am spared to see my home and friends.

One thing is certain, we drove the rascals and made them run for a long distance, and whether they have stopped yet, I know not.

I now undertake to give you a list of our killed and wounded that are from our village and vicinity. I commence with our dear boys whom we shall never see again. The first who fell was Corporal Daniel Sullivan. He fell on Sunday about 12 o'clock. He fought bravely. Soon after him followed Lieut. Hodges. He was shot in the head while rallying the boys. He was cool and was not in the least excited and led the boys on. The next one was Sergt. Ganoung. He was a fine man and a brave soldier. Soon after, my dear friend Charlie Bowen. He fought *bravely* and *nobly*, and now dear Charlie has gone to his long home. Dear fellow, I miss him very much, and shall always miss him as much as if he were my own brother. May our loss be his gain. Clark Winchester fell while fighting. He was a good boy and a brave soldier. The last was Ole Helgison, one of the boys that we have always thought much of, and one who was always on hand when duty called. A list of the

wounded—Ambrose Partch was wounded on Sunday in the arm, but he was not willing to leave the boys. Brave fellow, he fought three hours after he was wounded, and then on Monday was bound to go out with them again, which he did, and about noon received another wound, and this one was quite severe, the ball entering his side and coming out below his shoulder blade. I have not been able to see him. His brother Orville is also in the list. He was wounded Sunday, in the arm. I think they will both recover in time. They were both brave boys. Charles Turney is also on the list. He is wounded in the arm. Wesley Frazier, Michael Ainsbury, Fillmore Benjamin, James Garner, William Gaylord, Nels Helgison, Ole Holverson, Jacob Simcox, Michael Mahan, Henry Curtiss, Henry Joslyn, also Cousin Henry and friend Billy Snooks are wounded, but not severely. Among those severely wounded are Christopher Rittleson and James Goodwin. All of these boys stood up to their work nobly, in fact not a boy from the village flinched one particle. George Burns and Rienzi Cleveland were both very brave in the fight—both days, and came out without a wound, and several others whose names I cannot now call to mind, were with the company all the time. The boys of other towns of our county did themselves great credit, and never need old Winnebago be ashamed of her boys who are in the glorious '55th.'

Captain Bird is acting Major of our regiment and is wounded in the arm. Our acting captain was wounded also—1st Lieut. McIntyre, but their wounds are slight, and they will soon recover.

There are two that I must mention, I. G. W. Chase and Johnny Frazier. Johnny is orderly for Gen. Sherman, but had his horse shot from under him. You will soon get a better description than I have given you, from the papers. I was ordered with my train, and *there* duty called me, and *there* I must stay although I wished to be with the boys. The rebel skirmishers tried several times before I could get the train out of camp to 'draw a bead' on me but thanks to a kind providence

none of the bullets had any effect, and I escaped without a wound. I had my coat off and my red shirt was a splendid mark, and they made the bullets whiz by lively. I am well and enjoying myself as well as we can after such a fight and such awful scenes. A person could hardly walk in some places without walking on dead bodies."

"April 18th, 1862.

Since the fight I have been very busily engaged with my duties, so much so that I have lost several pounds of flesh, but as long as I am well I do not mind. We have been at work picking up articles that were left on the field, and getting our regimental property together. The enemy did not injure our tents when they came through on Sunday, and when they returned on *Monday*, there was no time. They without doubt calculated to remove the tents and appurtenances at their leisure. The clothing that our boys left was taken, but our colonel is endeavoring to procure more without any expense to the boys. And this is as it should be. The government is better able to bear the loss than the boys are.

How does Mrs. Campbell seem to bear the loss of dear Charley? We lost a fine friend when Charley was taken from us, and probably none of you feel his loss more than I do. Arden is improving slowly, and I do hope he will soon be entirely well, for it is not pleasant to be sick in the field and more especially the *battle* field. I think that Company C lost many of its *best* men. Yes, I know it did, I have pity for Sergt. Ganoung's family. He was a man respected and beloved by all his fellow soldiers. Clark Winchester's mother will mourn his loss, and we all will. George Byrnes is what *we* here call a trump; tough as a knot and bold as a lion.

This is paper that a poor boy who is now gone left. He was a friend of mine—J. A. Carpenter."

Of this letter I would say, there is a red print at the top of the first page of the sheet. It represents an eagle with a streamer in its beak, bearing the inscription, "*One people one*

government." Held by the talons, are various things through which is printed this motto: "From the Canadas to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico." *This* was what the soldier died for.

"April 26th, 1862.

He says he has been patiently waiting for a letter and "as the Hoosiers say", it would do him a *power* of good.

"We are very busily preparing for an advance, in fact, are advancing slowly. Yesterday a reconnoitering force went out and had a little skirmish, driving in the rebels who were at a place some five miles from Corinth, and destroying their camp by burning it. We took 15 prisoners. None on our side were killed, but three or four were wounded. Generals Buell and Pope are both with us, and we think that we are strong enough to whip any force that the enemy can bring. Gen. Halleck is in the field, and has command. I have seen him several times. He is a very fine looking man. His presence instills great confidence among the troops.

It is very lonely here. Most of the boys from the village are either in their long home or have been sent down the river on account of wounds. If I had not so much work to do, I should be still more lonely.

Oh, by the way, I never told you about 'our mess,' have I? We live like 'Nabobs.' Had for supper, roast beef, biscuit, rice, and pound cake, and Illinois butter, which cost only 35 cents per pound. The members of the mess buy these little extras. In our present mess are two captains, three lieutenants, the chief musician, and the *commissary*. We have jolly times. I have not received a letter since the battle, and it is now nearly three weeks. Probably before you see this letter you will hear a good account of the battle from our captain who is now at home. Arden is quite smart again and is doing duty. I hope he will continue well, for it is very hard to be sick where we have nothing but the ground to lie on, and that often damp and some-

times wet. I can lie down on the ground with nothing but my blanket, and for a roof the canopy of Heaven, and take one of the best night's rest that ever was."

"Pittsburg, April 29th, 1862.

I received your very welcome letter today and was very much pleased to hear from *Home*. I see that you have not received any letters from me since the battle. I thought it very strange that you did not answer, as I was very anxious to hear from you.

Today we received news that New Orleans was in our possession. I hope it may be so. I do not see how the enemy are going to hold out much longer. If McClellan is successful in taking Yorktown and we are in taking Corinth, I do not see where the rebels are again to make a stand. All are anxious for an advance. It seems that after a man has gone through what our boys have, that he loses all fear of bullets. I for one have never been sorry that I enlisted in this cause and if my life is spared I will continue in my country's service until this rebellion is put down, should it be ten years. I am entirely cured of the rheumatism, at least I have felt it but once since I have been in the service. My best respects to Mrs. Campbell, and tell her that all I can do to help Arden, will be done."

"In Camp Near Pea Ridge, May 3rd, 1862.

We moved to our present camp three days ago. Have just gotten it well arranged, and tomorrow we leave. Whether there will be an attack on the enemies' fortifications at Corinth, or at some other place, it is impossible for us to tell."

"In Camp Near Corinth, May 7th, 1862.

I have an opportunity of sending this by a friend who is going to Chicago. We are now within five miles of Corinth, and ere this reaches you there will be another great battle. We have artillery in profusion and our regiment is supporting the best in the field—Taylor's. We are on the extreme right, and hope to maintain our position. We had a very heavy rain a day

or two since, and it has left the roads in such a condition that it is impossible for us to get to the river. Our boys have to come down to one-half rations. It is rather hard, but we hope soon to be able to get some from the river. We are now living the life of soldiers for good. Day before yesterday we moved all day while the rain poured down in torrents to say the least, and at night pitched our tents, and lay ourselves down on the wet ground to sleep. My work is now very hard, but as long as I have my health I like it."

"Camp No. 4, six miles from Corinth, May 10th, 1862.

Yesterday Pope made an attack on the extreme left. It is reported that he was within one mile of their breast works, and had heavy guns in position. I have not heard any firing this morning and do not know whether they will do any fighting today. The impression is that an attack can not be delayed longer than Monday, the 12th inst. Siegel is with us and Curtiss is expected every day. This seems to be the place where both armies are concentrating all their available force. My position as you know is with the train. I am tired of this war but will never leave the army if this rebellion lasts fifteen years. Our force numbers nearly two hundred thousand effective men."

"Camp No. 5, near Corinth, May 13th, 1862.

Today our boys have gone out to reconnoiter. The news that Norfolk is ours puts new energy into every man."

"13 Miles from Corinth, June 11th, 1862.

You have ere this received a full account of the evacuation of the notable place—Corinth. I have visited it and procured a few relics from the deserted camps. Among the number is a painting. I will send you in this letter a Jeff Davis postage stamp, and when I have an opportunity, other things. We are living in hopes that we shall see Memphis soon. We leave for there tomorrow morning at 5 a. m."

"Lagrange, Tennessee, June 20th, 1862.

For the last two weeks we have been so very busy that it was impossible for me to find time to write home. We left

Chewalla about ten days ago. Have been marching about one-half of the time, the balance lying here. This place is one of the most beautiful of Tennessee. It is situated on the Memphis and Mississippi R. R. about forty miles from Memphis. Our brigade went out on a forced march the fore part of this week and returned yesterday. Holly Springs, Mississippi, is the name of the place that our boys took possession of. The enemy had nearly finished a fine armory, and were erecting large machine shops. Our forces searched the place and then returned. I have to communicate to you the painful intelligence that our dear friend, George Byrnes, is no more. He died on the way here from Chewalla. Typhoid fever was his disease. The boys of the company are quite well. Company C is losing many of its best boys. We do not know who will be the next to go. May I live so that if I am called, I may be ready. I tell you what it is, we are now in a hot secession place, and they are not afraid to express themselves in strong terms—the ladies especially. I had quite a rich argument with one of them the other evening. I still keep my old place in the Commissary Department and don't know but I will until this war closes, but I think that if any one in the regiment has earned something, I have. I am *a little* ambitious, and if we stay in the service two years more I will be a Lieutenant. Would not that be a good joke, but 'where there is a will, there is a way' is a true adage, and I believe in it. All are anxious to get to Memphis and get a little rest, at least through the hot months. If it is possible for me to get a furlough when we arrive there I shall. Would I not enjoy a short visit home? The weather is not quite as hot as I supposed it would be this time of the year. The nights are very cool. Direct to Memphis with the regiment and division written plainly. Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman's division."

"Moscow, Tennessee, July 9th, 1862.

To His Mother:

I am glad that I am serving my country, and would not trade places with any of my old friends who now enjoy the pleasures of home. Not that I do not prize home dear and the

society of the lady friends. This is what we miss much. There is restraint in a lady's presence or in their society. Here we have nothing to restrain. I shall make a ludicrous appearance should I ever be permitted to return home. I will know a little something of military life, but little of civil. We have all kinds of reports here concerning McClellan. We are confident that he will gain his point and take the confederate capital."

"Memphis, July 26th, 1862.

We arrived here the 2nd of this month, after a three days' march from Moscow. Memphis has many attractions, and I do not wonder that before this trouble it was thronged with visitors. The suburbs are delightful and there are many handsome residences with beautiful yards."

He said it was impossible to get a furlough.

In Camp Stuart, Memphis, Sept. 1st, 1862.

He is sick with intermittent fever. Letters have not come through and the weather is hot.

"September 8th, 1862.

Memphis seems to be about the same place that it was when our division arrived here, with the exception that we have now a strong fort nearly finished, which, when we came here, was but just commenced. I think that we are well prepared for an attack."

"Sept. 14th, 1862.

Our army on the Potomac is rather getting worsted. It does seem to me that the enemy are out-generalizing our generals, and are gaining much ground. I see that they are now in possession of several towns in Maryland, and are no great distance from the Federal capital. They are also raising the old Harry in Kentucky. Our new troops will soon have to be called into active service or the rebels will have gained the day. With regard to us here, we are holding the most important place on the western rivers. Since we came here there has been a very strong fort made which will hold many thousands. It is an

earthwork fort, but many heavy guns are mounted, and many are being mounted. If attacked we will fall back into the fort. Last week our brigade went out to reconnoitre and destroy some bridges. Were gone four days. Fifty mules and horses were confiscated, and several other minor articles."

"September 22, 1862.

I think the 74th regiment has made a good selection for field officers. You spoke of the government building barracks at Rockford to accommodate 4,000. Where are they situated, and is Major Bird in command? Old Illinois has done nobly, raising her quota of troops as quickly as she has. It does not seem to me that over a year has passed since I left home."

"October 3rd, 1862.

Now as regards the beautiful city of Memphis, the weather is still quite warm. The nights are cool enough for comfort, although the mosquitoes have not ceased their buzzing nor their biting. This is a great country for the lovely animals. As regards our regiment we are still in our old quarters and improving our camp. Memphis has been a great business place at some time, but now there is but little business done except what the army has brought with it. Fort Pickering is one of the largest earth work forts in the Union. The line of works is in many places built between fine houses. First a fine house and then an embankment about eight feet in height. The inside of the fort comprises about 400 acres. It is called almost impregnable. A force of 6,000 could easily keep back a force of five times its number."

"Memphis, October 26th, 1862.

Dear Mother: It is Sunday afternoon, and I am quite comfortably seated in tent with my back to a good fire place, in which there is a good fire. Yesterday we had a fine snow storm, away down here in the 'sunny south.' Not quite enough for sleighing, however. When are we going to get through soldiering is a question that is often asked. For my part I cannot see that the cursed rebellion is any nearer put down than it

was one year ago, and I believe that the south is more determined. I am no abolitionist, and never was, therefore I do not endorse Lincoln's emancipation proclamation. I believe in confiscation, but I do not in entire emancipation—at least before we know what to do with the negroes. I know that The Chicago Tribune thinks Lincoln has now made his mark, and his name will be handed down, as sacred as that of Washington, and The Tribune expresses the opinions of many, but the soldiers of Illinois do not endorse the proclamation or The Tribune.

But enough. I am writing to a mother and sister who I hope care little for politics.

On last Tuesday afternoon we received orders to march the next morning at 6 a. m. with three days' rations. Wednesday morning we marched off quite briskly. None of us knew our destination. The expedition was commanded by our colonel, and consisted of our regiment and 700 of the 6th Ill. Cav. We reached Rolla—nine miles distant from Memphis—the county seat of Shelby county, about 10 a. m. and did not stop till we had marched about three miles further. We then stopped before a large farm house. Our colonel went in, but soon came out and ordered the orderly sergeants to the front, and sent them into the house. We then began to think that something was up, and it was but a short time before a good share of the regiment were in, and the furniture of the house was taken out and the buildings in a blaze. The reasons for doing this were first, that one of the cavalry officers had been fired at from this house, and second, that the boys of the family were in guerrilla companies and were cotton burners. After this we marched on, and came to Union Depot on the Memphis & Ohio Railroad where we stopped and took dinner. Here we saw a party of guerrillas at a distance. Our cavalry were immediately sent in pursuit, but they had seen us and fled."

The rest of this letter is missing.

"November 17th, 1862.

Your most welcome letter was received only a few days since. It was on the steamer Eugene that was sunk just above

Ft. Pillow not long ago. There was a very large mail on board, but all was saved, although every letter was soaked with water. That we are preparing to move there is no doubt, as new regiments are coming here fast. There are now about twenty new regiments and more coming. We are formed into a new brigade the 4th, and our gallant colonel is in command. It is comprised of five regiments, three new and two old. The 55th Illinois, 57th Ohio, the 116th and 127th Illinois, and 83rd Indiana, making a large and fine brigade. Connected with it is the new but celebrated Mercantile Battery of Chicago. I think that after the new regiments have acquired a little more efficiency in drill, that our brigade will be hard to beat. Now I will say that I am not as anxious to get into the field as I was before transportation was so cut down. Mrs. Campbell is still here, is boarding a little way from camp. I was down and took dinner with her yesterday. Had a very good time. After dinner we went out to the review of our brigade, and the 1st, all commanded by Brig. Gen. Smith. It was a grand sight as Mrs. Campbell will tell you when she returns."

"December 1st, 1862.

We are now in camp about nine miles from the Talahachie River where it is supposed the rebels are in force. Today our regiment and three others have gone out to reconnoitre. After their return we shall know something of what we have to do. Yesterday our army and Grant's made a junction. You ought to see us in our little shelter tents. A vacancy occurred in the quartermaster's department by the promotion of our Q. M. By vote of the officers of the regiment, I was assigned to the position of Acting Regimental Quartermaster, and I will probably be appointed Quartermaster, at least I have the promise from the colonel and other officers. I have said nothing to you about this although I have been acting in this capacity for two weeks. I wish you to say nothing about it until the matter is settled. The pay is tolerably good, \$110.50 per month, and forage for horse. Col. Stuart will in a few days be a Brig. Gen., and a good one."

“Memphis, Dec. 14th, 1862.

We left this place the 25th of last month enroute for some place which we found to be the Tallehachie River, where the enemy were in force. They had built breast works, and were reported to have said that they would hold at all hazards, but we went prepared for them, and when we arrived, no enemy was to be found. After we had stayed at the Talahachie a few days, we were ordered to prepare for a movement back and we arrived here in Memphis yesterday after having traveled about one hundred and eighty miles, and having a good time. While we were gone I had plenty of chickens, turkey, and geese, but no soft bread. Hard tack was our bread ration. We now have orders to move on next Thursday to some place not known.”

“On Board Steamer Westmoreland, Mississippi River,
December 22nd, 1862.”

Receives news of the illness of his brother whom he fears he will never see again.

“Steamer Westmoreland, Yazoo River, Dec. 27th, 1862.

We have had a very fine time, and everything has gone along to our entire satisfaction. The weather has been pleasant, our boat is one of the best, and our captain is a perfect gentleman. The army is moving towards Vicksburg. Our landing is about ten miles from that place. I hope soon to be nearer.”

“Steamer Westmoreland, Jan. 5th, 1863.

On Friday night, the 26th, we arrived at our destination on the Yazoo River, it being about ten miles from the mouth of the river. At this place we landed during the night. No baggage was removed from the boat, with the exception of mules and wagons and amunition. The rest of the baggage was all left on board steamer until we should need it. Pickets were thrown out and we expected an attack. On Saturday morning our division was ordered to advance out into the timber. After marching about three miles they came upon the pickets of the

enemy and drove them. They had quite a force just back of their pickets which commenced skirmishing, which was kept up all day, our boys driving them slowly back. At nightfall our boys had driven the enemy to their fortifications and they rested upon their arms. Our regiment had been selected by Gen. Smith to do the skirmishing and they were engaged nearly all day Saturday without losing a man. Sunday morning at 3 o'clock, the artillery opened fire throwing shells."

The account of this fight is not all here, and the battle is not named.

"I will only say that our forces retreated Thursday night after protracted attempts to cross a bayou and levee on the other side of which were the enemy. Our forces attempted to dig through the levee and were so near that they could touch with their spades, the bayonets of the rebels when they put their guns over the eminence to fire upon them. General M.-L. Smith was seriously wounded, which had a disheartening effect, as all had great confidence in him. Out of 250 men of the 6th Ohio, 60 were killed and wounded."

"Steamer South Wester, Mississippi River, Jan. 21st, 1863.

We have been ordered again down the river, and have now arrived within forty miles of the Gibraltar of the West, and are still moving. The impression is that we will go into camp at Milliken's Bend about twelve miles this side of Vicksburg, and that our transports will be sent back to Memphis for a portion of Grant's army to reinforce us. I think that in the course of a month you will hear of a great battle being fought at Vicksburg. Our regiment has just returned from a foraging expedition. It was detailed with a boat for this purpose soon after the fight of Arkansas Post, which we captured. We went up the river near Napoleon to a plantation where we found a large quantity of corn and fodder, and some cattle which we confiscated for the use of the army. After working two days loading the boat, we found our fleet had left us, but we soon overtook it. Our regiment is in good health considering that we have been on the boat nearly all the time for the last month."

"In Camp Near Vicksburg, Jan. 24th, 1863.

Today I received six letters from home written all along from Dec. 3rd to the 8th of this month. I find it is not the fault of friends that I do not receive my mail, but that of Uncle Sam. We have now landed just opposite Vicksburg, and our boys are busily engaged in enlarging the 'Great Yankee Canal.' I think our general expects some day to turn the 'Father of Waters' from his course so as to cut off the great stronghold of Secession in the West. I sincerely hope we may succeed in the attempt, but I have doubts. Would you believe that an army of men could live and work while camping in a field of plowed ground, and that a low wet one? I will just picture to you my bed last night, which was a rainy one. In the first place we took a number of rails and made a kind of floor. At the place we intended for the head we piled more rails. From this place we laid rails and let them rest at the foot to serve as a support for our roof of oil blankets. This being finished we spread our blankets down on the lowest rails or floor, and retired for the night, and a good night's rest we had. Now this was much better than a great many had. What do you think of a soldier's life? (This is the 24th of January, too.) I like it as long as I have good health."

"February 10th, 1863.

We are still in camp near Vicksburg, and are doing but little. The only excitement is the canal digging which progresses slowly. Camp life here is very wearisome, I tell you. How does the bill which is now before Congress relating to the arming of 300,000 negroes suit the tastes of the men of Winnebago? They are good for such purposes as throwing up breastworks and digging canals, but I cannot think they are a class that should be armed. It was quite an exciting time when one of our fleet—The Queen of the West, ran the blockade and went through without receiving any injury. She passed the batteries at Warrenton a few miles below Vicksburg, and went on her way undisturbed. After going quite a distance she saw ahead of her in the river the transports loaded with supplies for the

enemy. These she disposed of in quick time and came back, her captain flushed with the pride of victory."

"February 25th, 1863.

We are still at work at the canal. We are having a debating club to pass away the time. In regard to promotion, the Colonel has sent for my commission. He has written for it to date from Sept. 1st. If I can draw pay for that time the government will owe me about \$800."

"March 1st, 1863.

You will perhaps think it strange, but we are still opposite Vicksburg, at work a part of the time on the canal."

"Young's Point, La., March 18th, 1863.

The regiment has been ordered upon the levee to camp, and I tell you we are in close quarters. It is certain that as soon as it becomes warmer it will be impossible for us to stay where we now are on account of the extremely unhealthy conditions. For the last week I have been unable to attend to duty but have been around most of the time."

"March 27th, 1863.

Our regiment has just returned from a foraging expedition. The principal article confiscated was cotton. They captured over 3,000 bales, also about 400 head of cattle, besides quite a number of mules and horses. They were away ten days, and I should judge from their statements that they all had a good time. One thing is certain, I did not. I was left in camp here sick, and when I got about, all or nearly all were gone, and it was very lonely. Work on the canal has stopped and the water is now running through quite briskly. Whether we shall be able to run boats through very soon, I cannot tell, but hope we may. The general impression is now that an attack will be made on Vicksburg before many days. Probably you have not heard that two of our boats tried to run the blockade a few mornings ago, and the Lancaster was sunk, and the Switzerland went through, though injured. Our men are too bold in

my opinion. They take daylight instead of night to run by the batteries."

"Father, Mother, and All:

A little document came today directed in this style: *Lieut. Thaddeus Capron*, Co. C., 55th Ill. Vol. Inf. U. S. A.

So you may know that at last his excellency, Gov. Yates has sent the commission. It dates from Sept. 4th, 1862. When I shall have fixed the pay part, you will receive the document for safe keeping."

"Young's Point, April 20th, 1863.

Dear Sister Louise:

Not long since I received your very kind letter and meant to have answered it ere this, but pressing business prevented. I know you will excuse me. I am sorry to hear, dear sister, that your health is so poor. I fear that you have worked too hard the last year, and that has brought you down. Now I will tell you what I want you to do for me and yourself—to rest, and not try to do much of any work this summer. All you need to do is to help mother a little. I do not want you to teach, and you must not do it. I think that better times are in store for all of us, and we must be very careful of ourselves so that we may enjoy them. In my letter to Mother I told her that at any time you wanted money, to use what I have there at home, and when that is gone, I will have more there if nothing happens. I want you to use it when you need it, I mean all of you. I have been quite anxious to hear from Father for a long time, but he has not written. He never tells me anything how matters are, and I am quite anxious to know. It seems as if there must be a good opening for him soon, and he must keep up good courage. I being a young man should not give council, but as I have, will let it go, hoping that Father will not be offended. I like Ambrose much better than I formerly did. The army is the place to bring out a person's true character. It is the best place in the world to study human nature, and as this was always a favorite study with me, I find ample opportunity. In the same

letter you speak of Orville and A. B. I expect by the time I arrive at home (if my life is spared) that all of you young people will be married off, and settled down in your comfortable homes. Well, so be it. I have about concluded to live the life of a *bachelor*, and I cannot see that it will make much difference to me. I may do as Uncle Joe did, but I think not. But enough of this. When you write me tell all the news. You will doubtless hear before this reaches you that nine of our gunboats ran the blockade; also two transports. One transport was fired and burned, probably from the bursting of a shell."

"Milliken's Bend, La., May 5th, 1863.

About a week since, we received orders to be prepared to move at fifteen minutes notice, and on last Tuesday orders came to embark, but to take no camp equipage, nothing but three days' rations. We were to make a feint on Hains' Bluff so as to attract the attention of the enemy from below, while Grant with his main army made the attack. The expedition was a very successful one. We menaced the enemy for over two days and then quietly withdrew, as was the intention when we first landed. We then proceeded down the Yazoo River and then to Young's Point, where we disembarked. Receiving orders to commence loading our camp equipage and property we went about it as soon as we could reach our camp. By noon we were all loaded and ready to start on our way up the river to the Bend where we arrived about sunset, too late to go into camp, and remained on board steamer until morning. It is now quite warm. It is what we would call at the North *hot*, but here we call it *warm*.

Grand Gulf, below Vicksburg is in our possession, and we hope to soon be upon the heights of Vicksburg. I hope it will be soon as there we can enjoy the breezes and lie under the stately oaks. I think if they will give me permission to pick out a camp for our regiment over there that we will have a good one. I am getting along very well, and have my reports nearly all up to the first of the month. I tell you what it is, we in the

quartermaster's department of this U. S. army, have some papers to make out. To obtain any one article we have to make out nine papers, and then have to report it on seven other papers. These are of five different kinds, so you see that there is some writing to be done besides the hard work. It is no small matter to supply and keep supplied a regiment of men, but it is a place I like and I do the work cheerfully."

"June 7th, 1863.

We have been besieging Vicksburg, but with what result we know not as yet. One thing we do know, and it is that the Rebs have not yet surrendered. I do not think it possible for them to hold out another week. Our brigade returned from an expedition on Wednesday last. They went nearly to Yazoo City, but found no force and returned. A few guerrilla parties were scouting around, and picking up any who should straggle. I have but little time to write. Most of the time I have to be on the road between here and the landing, five miles distant, drawing provisions, ammunition, forage, etc. I tell you what it is, we have soldiered for certain since we left the Bend. We have marched about 220 miles, been in three fights, besides being right up to the enemy for several days. Our beds are the ground, and nothing but our blankets and valises with us. Transportation has been used to haul rations and ammunition. Since we have been besieging we have not dared to move our camp equipage for fear that we might be ordered off to some place in the rear and would have no teams to move it. Therefore we let it remain at the Point, where it is well cared for. I do hope that we may soon occupy Vicksburg, for I am anxious to get my work up to date, so that I may try and get home to see you by the 4th of July, but I hardly expect it.

On the charge of the 19th one regiment took the lead of our brigade and was up to within three rods of the rebel works. This position they held for several hours. The Rebs dare not raise up to fire upon them, for if they did, numbers of shots would be fired at them. It is the greatest wonder that our regiment did

not lose more men than they did, for no regiment was under sharper fire than they for some time.

Our loss since we left the Bend has been forty-two, killed and wounded. Fourteen were killed or died of wounds. Co. C has suffered quite severely, three killed and four wounded. I tell you what it is, I had rather be a member of that company, than any company in this U. S. service. It is called the best company in our regiment as it always has been, and it has one of the best captains in the service. Capt. Shaw is a *man*, and a perfect gentleman and good officer. He was the recipient of a present from his company a few days ago. It consisted of a sword and belt and sash and shoulder straps of splendid quality. He knew nothing of it until the boys presented them to him. He was surprised, but was much pleased to have such a token of esteem from his men."

"Rear Vicksburg, June 14th, 1863.

Another Sabbath has returned and we are still out of Vicksburg. I thought when I wrote you a week ago that by this time we should surely be *in* Vicksburg. I am not going to prophesy any more, for I am afraid I am not a prophet. This is a beautiful morning and all is very quiet. There is but little firing on either side. Occasionally a stray shot comes zipping by. Our brigade is now with the advance, and are but a short distance from the Reb's works. I should think that our camp was not far from 100 rods from the Rebel fort. Our sharp shooters are within five rods in some places. Our pickets last night were not over *thirty* feet from those of the rebels. Our men and the Rebs have quite sociable chats sometimes. One night the Rebs told our boys to keep their heads down as they had orders to shoot. At other times they will tell the sergeant or corporal who is posting his pickets, when they think he has come near enough, to halt, and post his men. Deserters who came from their lines a day or two since, say that they cannot hold out much longer. It does seem that we cannot long be so close to each other without accomplishing something. It is reported that Gen. Joe Johnson is coming on to attack our rear.

If he thinks it would be profitable for him he had better try it; I think he would receive a good warm reception. Firing with us this evening was quite brisk for some time. It must be very annoying to the Rebs to have so many shells bursting right in their midst, even if they do but little damage. It has a tendency to demoralize their army and if this is accomplished they will hold out but a short time longer. There is a rumor that the men have been promised the privilege of going to Chicago after Vicksburg is taken, but I don't think there is any prospect of such good luck. Such a thing *might* happen, especially if we take many prisoners. I can see no possible show for any that are now in the place to escape, yet they may manage some way to get part of them away."

"June 18th, 1863.

Vicksburg is not yet ours, but I am confident that it will soon be. Our men are right up under their works and but little time can elapse before something will be done that I think will bring the Rebs to terms. Our pickets and theirs are not over twenty feet apart in places. I tell you that Gen. Grant has shown himself to be one of the very best planning and manœuvring generals that we have in the service. Vicksburg is said to be nearly as strongly fortified as Sevastopol was. I think that if we succeed (as we shall) in taking Vicksburg and Port Hudson and what men are in the two places, that it will be such a blow to the Confederacy that they will never be able again to organize a large army in the west. They would be entirely cut off from their western supplies. I hope one thing, that if we take these two places, our army will rest but a short time, and will speedily push forward and conquer place after place, and keep driving the enemy until they have no place to go but the Gulf of Mexico, if they would not surrender. Our men are all hard at work both night and day making advances. We are making what we term saps or mines extending from our main works to those of the Rebels. The intention is to undermine their works and blow them up. If I return home I shall be proud to say that I was in the siege of Vicksburg and the bat-

tles of Shiloh, Russell House, Corinth, Holly Springs, Chicasaw Bayou, Arkansas Post, and Champion Hill. Our regiment has been in all of these besides a few little skirmishes now and then. I am glad to learn that you keep up your aid society and also a Union League. I tell you it cheers us up to know that friends at home are working for us and the cause. I tell you our government must be sustained, and will be as long as Lincoln is president. There are some things in his administration that I do not approve, but I will always uphold a man who is lawfully elected president of our country.

I have had for the last few days very hard work to perform. An order came to move all of our camp and garrison equipage from Young's Point to the Yazoo Landing. I had but a few men to move the property of our regiment, and they were convalescents. No men could be spared from the regiment to be gone as long as it would take. I will be all right after a day's rest."

"June 29th, 1863.

Everything remains about the same. Gen. Grant says that he can take possession of Vicksburg any day that he wishes to, but that it will require more sacrifice of life than he is willing to make. It may be weeks before it is in our possession, but it must come sooner or later."

"Walnut Hills, Mississippi, July 4th, 1863.

Glorious news. Vicksburg is ours! They surrendered today, the 4th, 23,000 prisoners, and 23,000 stand of arms, twenty or more siege guns, considerable field artillery, is the statement now made. I cannot vouch for its correctness, but judge that it is not far out of the way. I am proud to belong to the army of Gen. Grant. Gen. Grant is the great general of our army. *Gen. Grant* and *W. T. Sherman*, long may they live to lead our armies.

Does the North now wish Gen. Grant removed? You now can see what little trifles they find fault with. Gen. Grant was not active enough to suit, but we now see what he has

accomplished. He has displayed the best generalship yet shown since the beginning of the war. We have now the stronghold of the Southwest, and communication is nearly open the entire length of the Mississippi and cutting off their communication with the west entirely. Our army now has double reason for celebrating the Fourth. I have no more time to write, as we have orders to be ready to move at a moment's notice, and I am not yet quite ready. Our destination is not known but is supposed to be a tramp after Joe Johnson. I hope if such is the case that we shall be able to take him and his entire force just as we have Pemberton. Maybe this army is not victorious! No, I guess not."

"Three miles from Jackson, Miss., July 11th, 1863.

Before our boys had the pleasure of taking a view of the place we had been so long working to take, we received orders to be ready to move at a moment's notice, and had no time to take pleasure trips. About 6 p. m. we received orders to move at 12 o'clock that night with ten days' rations, and no camp equipage—nothing to impede a speedy march. Twelve M. came and we were not off, and did not leave our camp until 6 a. m. Jackson is surrounded or nearly so, and Joe Johnson and his force are supposed to be in Jackson. Gen. W. T. Sherman is in command of this army which consists of three army corps and two divisions of another. The 15th, 13th, and 9th, and a part of the 16th army corps. As yet, there has been but little fighting. Our men are getting ready and in good positions. The Confederates are fortified, and we are protecting our artillery and men by making breast works of cotton."

"Jackson, July 18th, 1863.

We are in Jackson. Our troops occupied it yesterday morning. Johnson retreated. We had not sufficient force to surround him, and he made his escape. We have taken five or six hundred prisoners. The troops are now resting. I hope we may be allowed to rest at least a few days. Rumor is that we shall go back to Vicksburg. Jackson has been a very handsome city, but it is now fast going to destruction. Many houses and

buildings have been burned by our forces and the Rebs. We are much gratified if the reports prove true about Mead and Rosecrans. It now looks as though our army was going to work in earnest."

"Vicksburg, Aug. 3rd, 1863.

Camp life with us is very pleasant, for we are greatly in need of rest. It makes me sad at times to look back and think of what we have as a company gone through, and how few of us will return to our homes after our term of service expires. It is not likely that I shall be able to see you very soon, but I hope some day to make a visit. I shall hardly know C. and J. when I see them, and the little one I certainly shall not. Our latest papers are those of the 29th. Rienzi Cleveland met with an accident a day or two ago. He was out after lumber, and a heavy thunderstorm came up. He took refuge under the roof of an old blacksmith shop. The shop blew down, and something struck his arm, breaking the bone near the wrist. He came to camp soon after where he had good care and is now doing first rate. Ren. is a tip-top fellow and is liked by all."

"Camp Sherman, Miss., Aug. 8th, 1863.

Dearest Mother and All: Your letter bearing the painful intelligence of dear Sister Louise's sickness and your own was received today. You truly said that God was merciful in sparing sister's life, and will He not be merciful still. I was shocked when I received the intelligence, but I hope for the best. I cannot bear the idea of our family being broken. Mother, I cannot bear the idea of dear Louise calling my name, and I *far, far* away. Oh, could I go and see her and you all. I will go before long, and may I not be too late. Mother, I feel as though dear sister was going to get well. I hope that it is no vain delusion. Tell her I will try my utmost to go home in September. I have the promise of a leave of absence then, but cannot possibly get away now. If I could, should start tonight. I have to wait the slow way that Uncle Sam has of carrying intelligence before I can hear from you. My health is exceed-

ingly good, and I am getting my business in shape as fast as possible to go home in September. I am temporarily assigned as Brigade Quarter Master."

"August 16th, 1863.

I am *very very* anxious to hear from you. Days seem as weeks. I hope that all are much better. I shall be very glad to make you a visit. Two years is quite a time to be away from *home*."

"August 26th, 1863.

Dear Sister: I am so glad to hear that you are much better. You can imagine with what pleasure I perused that letter when I saw that it was in your hand writing. I have a touch of the blues, but never mind I will work it off, for I have work enough to do.

The trouble is just this, that I have too *much* work to do. Col. Malmborg when he took command of the brigade, insisted that I should come with him as his Brigade Q. M. I told him that I had all that I could attend to in the regiment. He then said that I must try and stay with him for a short time at least, and that I should have all the help I required. And here I am Q. M. of the regiment and of the Second Brigade, but I will be relieved from one place or the other very soon, and I cannot think of making you a visit until I am relieved. It is much harder for me to leave than it is for a company officer, nevertheless I prefer the position to any place in the army, for the reason that it has been my business to learn this branch."

(This was the last letter before going home on leave of absence. He left home to return to army, October 5th.)

"Memphis, October 19th, 1863.

I arrived at this place on the 9th inst., and I was glad to get back to the regiment again after a good visit at *Home*.

We met with quite an accident in moving up the river. The boat that carried our transportation was sunk a few miles above Vicksburg. I lost all my wagons, harness, etc., but will have no

trouble in accounting for them to the government. Since I returned I went out on an expedition and was gone six days. Upon returning I found orders to report at Memphis as a witness in a case before the Military Commission."

"Near Bear Creek, Alabama, Oct. 26, 1863.

By looking on the map you will find Tuscumbia situated on the Tennessee River in the State of Alabama. We are about twelve miles from that place. It is supposed that there will be quite a force at Tuscumbia to impede our progress. Bragg may send some of his troops in this direction. I am glad that Gen. Grant is put in command of all the western troops. He now commands what were three departments—the Ohio, Cumberland, Tennessee. I am very sorry to learn that Gen. Rosecrans has been removed. Many in our army cannot understand why it is so. When I last wrote to you Col. Malmborg was quite sick. He is now better and sends his respects to you. My keg came through all right. Cakes were good. I gave the company one."

"Bridgeport, Alabama, Nov. 17th, 1863.

I will give you a sketch of our trip to this point, and of my movements since I returned to my regiment. I rejoined the regiment about forty miles from Corinth, at Cherokee Station, on the Memphis and Charleston R. R. They were in much better health than when I first found them at La Grange. The next day after I arrived they were ordered to move without transportation to Tuscumbia to engage the enemy who were there in some force, and who had been sending out detachments, which were attacking our pickets almost nightly. They were gone two days. Had a skirmish with the enemy, and routed them, taking a few prisoners, besides the killed. A few of our men were wounded but none killed in the First Division of our corps. After resting one day we were again ordered to move, and changed our direction, marching direct to the Tennessee River, striking it at Eastport. We were here detained two days awaiting the crossing of the Third Division and a part of our

Division which was by a ferry boat, and two or three light draft steamers. Our brigade was about eight hours in crossing the river. Soon after we had crossed we received orders to march, and have been engaged in that business for sixteen days, averaging sixteen miles each day, making 256 miles that we have marched since the first of November. Our troops have stood the march well so far, and say that it has been the best conducted march that they ever participated in. Our Division has been consolidated into two brigades, and is now commanded by Brig. Morgan L. Smith. We are now in the 1st Brig., commanded by Brigadier Gen. Giles A. Smith, a brother of Morgan L. and his equal in ability. We are again with the old 8th Mo., and you will hear from us here among the mountains of Chattanooga. During our march we have passed through some of the roughest country that I ever saw. The march has been a hard long one. I have been particularly fortunate with my transportation, traveling the entire distance without having a breakdown to stop a single wagon. I have been the only one so fortunate in our brigade.

Col. Malmborg is now quite well, and sends his respects to the friends of the Q. M. as he calls me. Henry Hurlbut is in good health, and is with his company. Capt. Shaw was left at Corinth, sick, but is better. I believe that all the boys of Co. C are well. They received a part of the articles sent down to them, and the balance I think are in Memphis. They could not be moved for want of transportation. I have as yet been unable to have any photographs taken."

"November 29th, 1863.

As you will see by the heading of my letter, we are at Chattanooga. We arrived on the 21st inst. The next day our corps was ordered to the front with three days' rations in haversacks, and to be ready for a fight.

The rebels were in a strong position, nearly surrounding Chattanooga, and they must be dislodged. Our corps was the one designated to open the fight, by making a flank movement

on the enemy's right and turning his line of battle. In order for us to accomplish this movement, our brigade had to cross the river in boats, and after reaching the opposite shore hold the enemy in check until a pontoon bridge could be laid across the river. Our brigade went up the river some two miles above the place the bridge was to be laid. Here they embarked in the night, and with muffled oars were rowed down the river to the place where they were to land. Men were sent out who captured the Rebel pickets with hardly a shot being fired. So still was the approach of our men, that as they were ordering the officer in charge of the pickets to surrender, he exclaimed, "Good God are the Yankees here?" It was a complete success, and in a short time the bridge was down, and before daylight we had a strong force landed in the rear of the enemy. The Confederates finding that we had flanked them, thought to drive us off, but "Tecumseh" Sherman was prepared, and drove them from their outmost works, and cut their railroad to Richmond, and was working hard to cut the road leading to Atlanta. The Rebs concluded after a good deal of hard fighting to retreat and did so on the night of the 26th and our men are after them. Heavy cannonading has been heard today, and we judge that they have overtaken them. The Rebs have fought hard and desperately. I have as yet no estimate of our loss in this fight. Our brigade has suffered but little. In fact, they were in the fight but a short time. They were held back for the reason that they were the brigade which risked so much in the start, and performed the feat of crossing the river in boats and landing right under the enemy's works in the night, not knowing what they would there find, and knowing that no reinforcements could reach them if they could not lay the bridge, and also knowing that retreat was an utter impossibility. Gen. Giles A. Smith, our brigade commander was wounded the next evening after our brigade crossed the river. The brigade misses him much, but he is not seriously wounded. We have about four thousand prisoners and rumor says tonight that we have captured seventeen thousand, although I give it little credit. There

is also a rumor that Buckner and his staff are all taken. I hope so, but it is most too good to be true. Our Cavalry yesterday captured about 200 of the enemy's train, and one Head Quarter's train of twenty wagons was included. When all is known with regard to this fight we shall find that the Rebs have lost in great numbers, and that their army is demoralized and cut up.

If Bragg could not fight us in the position he had a few days since, I don't think he will be able to fight us in any place. If we can only crush this army as we did the army of the Mississippi, I shall be perfectly satisfied."

(This is the last of 1863. No letters in December, 1863.)

"Quarter Master's office, 55th Ill. Inf.,
Larkinsville, Ala., January 8th, 1864.

Dear Sister Cynthia: Your kind letter of Dec. 26th just came to hand, and I was very happy to hear from you, and that you had a pleasant time Christmas. I thank you for your Christmas wish, and will say that I had a very merry Christmas—plenty of work to do, and a dinner of bacon and hard tack. New Years the same. As you will see by the heading of my letter we have again moved since I last wrote you. We left Bellefont yesterday, and arrived here this morning—a distance of fifteen miles. The roads are very rough and in places muddy, but we came through without much trouble, and are now here encamped, and are fixing up to make ourselves comfortable.

Larkinsville is a small village situated on the Memphis and Charleston R. R., about midway between Huntsville and Bridgeport. The houses are nearly all deserted, and I am now occupying an old store for my office and store room, and will be perfectly satisfied if they will allow us to spend a month or so here. Henry Hurlbut is with me and will stay for a few weeks at least. He is well, and is a good companion. He is clerking and helping me in different ways. I begin to think that the bachelor's life is the one for me, and a jolly one it will be. I have not heard from cousin Ada for a long time. I wrote her

a day or two ago. I shall expect an elaborate description of Therese's marriage when I hear from her."

(Ada and Therese are daughters of a brother of Father Capron.)

"I am glad that you are all having such pleasant times this winter. I would enjoy a short visit there, but I think that it will be some time before I shall again be able to make you a visit, and by the time I do, I expect that things will be much changed. What is Ard Bowen doing this winter, and where is Orville H. Partch? I have heard nothing from the boys for some time. I presume they have forgotten me—but never mind. I would like to hear from you oftener. Will you please write. Yesterday we had quite a little snow storm. The ground is frozen hard enough to bear up teams."

"Headquarters 1st Brigade, 2nd Div., 15th A. C.
Q. M. office, Larkinsville, Ala., Jan. 12th, 1864.

Time in its evolutions makes many changes, and as you will see, I am somewhat changed in my position in the army. Instead of being a one-horse regimental quarter master, I wish to inform you that I am Acting Assistant Q. M. of the 1st Brigade. How long I shall hold this place I know not, but have good reason to believe that it will be permanent at least for some time. How well I shall fill the place of Brigade Q. M., remains to be seen, but one thing is certain, I shall try to do my duty, and think I will, but enough.

I have for some time been anxiously looking for a letter from home, but no such welcome missive arrives, and I will await with patience hoping soon to hear from you. I have been relieved of my duties with the regiment. Lieut. H. L. Healy is now the acting Q. M. He is a fine young man and is from Ogle County, I think. You have without doubt read of many regiments enlisting in the veteran service, and have asked the question, 'I wonder if the old 55th is among the number?' She has not yet gone in as a regiment, but if the time is extended to

the 1st of March, I think that it will be among the number. I do not myself expect to be out of the service in less than three years, unless the war closes, and I am content to stay until it does close, if my health is good. I am willing to do all I can for the putting down of this rebellion, may it take three years or ten. One thing I do intend to do, and this is to visit home oftener than once in three years. If I remain here, I shall have the pleasure of being with the best Brig. Genl., in the service, Gen. Giles A. Smith, who is now home, wounded, but he will return in February.

I was ordered a few days since to take a party of cavalry and forage for beef, and who do you think I had for my escort? A company of the 1st Ala. Cav. They were sound Union men, I tell you, and have endured every persecution from the Rebs, that could be thought of—almost. They were good men for the work that I had to do, for they knew every man, and knew whether he was a union man or a rebel. I had a very pleasant trip. Found many good union people; in fact, the union sentiment here is very strong and many are coming in and taking the "oath of allegiance" in accordance with the President's last proclamation. We are all glad to see it, and help them along as much as possible. I think that ere many years have passed, the good old Union will be restored and peace reign.

We have very good quarters, and hope we will be allowed to remain here for the winter. You can see by my writing that I am in good spirits. Has Col. Malmborg called upon you yet? We have not heard a word from him since he left. Where is Theron Hurlbut now? I did not see him when we were at Chattanooga. Give my very best respects to Mrs. Campbell and all enquiring friends."

"Larkinsville, January 23rd, 1864.

Were you here in the mud a few days, you would wish for the frozen terra firma. The weather has been very fine and warm, and the ground is drying up very rapidly. If you will

look on the map you will see that we are in Dixie's Land sure, and if I am not much mistaken we shall see farther into it before the 1st of next May. My present position is much easier than the one in the regiment, and I think that I can remain here if I wish to do so. But I have a great attachment for my old regiment and it is almost like leaving home to leave it, and further than this, there is a very good prospect of the regiment enlisting in the *veteran service*. If such be the case the regiment will receive a furlough home for thirty days and to recruit, may take much longer. Nothing will do me more good than to see our old regiment hold its number among the veterans of Illinois, and you need not be at all surprised if you hear that your brother is a *veteran volunteer*.

Sister, I started in the service as a private in that regiment, and have arrived at the position I now occupy. I have formed some very strong attachments that bind me to that regiment. Should it return north, I should never enjoy a happier day than that upon which we arrive in Chicago; and more than this, it would be no small gratification to me to return with a large portion of old company *C* to our noble county, Winnebago. I wish nothing said about our regiment enlisting until you learn that they have done so, and then you can look for the veterans home."

Letter to his father, February 6th, 1864.

"My last letter home was written just before starting on a march across the river, and was of necessity a very short one.

The object of our march, or raid it might be called, across the river in the direction of Rome, Georgia, was in all probability a movement to divert the attention of the Rebs while a movement of greater importance was being accomplished—namely, Thomas' advance on Dalton. We however find that Dalton is evacuated and Thomas is, or was there. My authority is not the best, but it seems to be the general impression that Johnson has left Dalton. Where he is, I cannot learn. One

thing is certain, that he will have his hands full when he manœuvres with U. S. or W. T. We were out about forty miles from the river on our late expedition; captured a few prisoners and returned after having a very pleasant time as far as the weather was concerned. It was as fine as could be asked for, much like our May weather North, only that the nights were a little cooler. The country was as poor as any I ever saw, and I never have seen such a miserable poor set of inhabitants since I came into the service; without provisions enough to more than barely keep them alive until another harvest. Ragged, uneducated, and I may say with little or no energy, they must drag out a miserable existence. We found many good *union* families, and they are now crossing the river in squads, and taking the Oath in accordance with 'Old Abe's' proclamation of amnesty. You asked me in your letter how I now liked 'Old Abe.' I will tell you frankly that I have now, and have had great faith in Lincoln as the executive of our government, and shall, (should he be nominated,) support him for another term of four years, but in saying this, I do not retract a word of what I said when home, that in some measures I could not now, and never shall agree with the president's views. Some things in the conscription act, and also in the confiscation act, that perhaps you and I would never agree upon. Politics trouble me little. I believe if Abraham Lincoln gets the nomination for president he will be elected. The army will give him a very large majority. This is the opinion of many others, some of whom were strong Douglas men when they came into the service. What is the sentiment of the banner county—Winnebago—on the subject, and what do you think of his being renominated? Please write me soon and let me know all about your views in regard to things. Mother asked me in her last letter if I had received my commission, and I forgot to tell her when I wrote. I received it as soon as I returned to the regiment from home, and was mustered in soon after, for three years or during the war as 1st Lieut. and Regimental Q. M., 55th Ill. Inf. Vols., which muster will hold me if the regiment should retain

its organization for three years from the 10th day of October, 1863.

I am brought in contact with some officers that I should have little business with, were I in the regiment, and they are of a class that will improve my business talent (however small it may be). I tell you, Father, the schooling I have had in the army has been worth more to me as far as learning and acquiring business habits is concerned, than I could have acquired in many years in civil life.

How is Mother's health this winter and how are you all getting along? Emma is still at Davis teaching, is she not, and Louise at home? I have heard nothing from Ard. or the Partch boys for some time."

"Head Quarters 1st Brigade, Feb. 23, 1864.

To Louise: I find by your letters that you have been at Mrs. Barningham's for some little time; also that Fannie Bement is teaching at the Crane's schoolhouse. I know you have had lively times with Fannie as company. Yesterday we celebrated Washington's birthday, by firing the national salute, and the troops were all out in honor of the day. Last night they were to have a fine party at Huntsville. I had an invitation to go, but there being an inspection of transportation this morning I could not well go. I will enclose my invitation ticket, that you may see what kind of printing is done by us in the army. Gen. Sherman has a small printing press with his H'd. Q'rs., which are at Huntsville, although he himself is not there, nor has he been for some time, yet his headquarters and part of his staff are there. I find by the R. R. Democrat that Col. Malm-borg was in Rockford a short time since, and made a war speech. The Democrat also states that he will soon visit Durand. I hope he may, and I know you would like to see the leader of the 55th and hear him talk. I received a letter from him yesterday in which he said that he probably would visit Durand in a couple of weeks from the date of his letter which

was the 17th. Gen. Giles A. Smith arrived here a day or two since. Has recovered almost entirely from his wounds. He looks well."

"March 10, 1864.

You are anxious to know what the news is here with us. I have to answer that there is none. Everything here is quiet, and we are still here in camp, leading a monotonous life—our principal pastime being games of baseball. Farmers here are preparing their ground for corn and cotton. The former principally. They have but little help, and few animals to do their work, and have to get along as well as they can. I tell you it comes hard for some of these old wealthy planters to work themselves, but in many cases they are doing some work. I hope no army shall ever pass over the prairies of our State. Destruction is awful wherever any army moves."

(He tells them they may sell his horse, Ritt, for not less than \$130, that she ought to bring \$150. She was only an average horse or below average.)

"March 19th, 1864.

How is my pet Josey (the little rogue)? I want him to write me a letter. He is now getting nearly old enough to write his brother a letter, and little Ernie I presume is as lively and full of fun as ever. I want you to kiss them both for me."

"Larkinsville, March 22, 1864.

A few days since we had an addition to our brigade of a regiment—the 111th Ill., numbering about 800 men. It is quite an addition as far as numbers go, and I think it is a good regiment. They have not as yet been in a fight, which accounts for their superiority of numbers. The old 55th is right side up with care, and is in camp at Larkin's Landing on the bank of the Tennessee River about ten miles distant from here. I have not been to the regiment but once in a long time. I have been unable to be away from the office for any length of time, except when business called me. Capt. Shaw returned a few days

since, and the boys are all much pleased to see him with them again. I do not know when I have had the pleasure of an acquaintance which I liked better than Capt. Shaw. I don't know why you should have expected a scolding from me when you referred to ———. I do not intend to interfere with the plans of my sisters in such matters. I consider that they have good sound judgments and can act for themselves. I know if my mind was made up in such matters it would be nothing more than throwing brands upon the fire to try to change me, but it is not, and there is a strong probability that it will remain just as it is for some time to come, and perhaps forever. Would I not make a gay bachelor? You would not make a nice old maid, so you need not think of it. My being away need not mar the pleasures of the *first* wedding in the least, for my heart and best wishes will be with you all. There is now no prospect of the regiment enlisting as a veteran regiment, and all are making their calculations on being out of the service next fall, and are counting the time by months. Only seven months more. I have not as yet made up my mind whether I shall remain in the service or not when the regiment is mustered out. I learn from Cynthia's letter that I received a few days ago, that Father had at last found a good situation as insurance agent. I hope that it will suit him. When you see the Misses Steves give them my best respects and tell them that this being leap year (and I being a soldier) that a letter from them would be very acceptable, and would be answered instant. It has snowed here for the last twenty hours, and there is now about six inches in depth on the ground. More snow than we have seen here this winter. It is melting fast, however, and in a day or so will be gone."

"April 10, 1864.

I have been anxiously watching the mails for several days hoping to hear from you in regard to dear Father's health. In my last letter I mentioned that there was a probability of the regiment reenlisting as veterans, and they will be up some time

during the latter part of the month, I am sorry to say that I shall be unable to accompany them, or rather to visit you. We shall probably leave on our spring campaign in a few weeks and I am busy getting ready."

"April 12, 1864.

I was very sorry when I learned of Father's sickness that I was unable to be with you, but it was impossible, and I had to wait in suspense, which thanks to you at home was only a short time before I received Louise's letter stating that Father was better, and considered out of danger."

"April 24, 1864.

Without doubt you have ere this seen several of the members of Co. C, and I hope and believe that they are having a pleasant time at home. I am very glad that things were so arranged that Henry Hurlbut could be at home, and he will have to visit for both of us. He has informed you of all the particulars, without doubt. Enclosed you will find the photos of Brig. Gen. Giles A. Smith, my commanding officer, and one of Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman. Please keep them for me, and if you wish others I will send you some. Lieut. E. H. Moore rooms with me. I find him a very pleasant young man. He is well acquainted with an old friend of ours—Alice Eddy. He says she is now in Indiana attending school.

I was at Huntsville a few days since and spent two days. It is a beautiful town and has not been much injured by either the rebel army or ours."

"Larkinsville, Ala., April 29, 1864.

We are under orders to march at seven o'clock a. m. tomorrow, and shall probably leave our beautiful village L. for the more exciting duties of the field. I am glad it is so, for I am tired of the monotony of camp life. Rumor says that we shall probably see Chattanooga ere many days. I am sure the 15th A. C. is not anxious to be with the Army of the Cumberland, but if our commanding general thinks our services are needed more

in that department, I for one am perfectly willing to do my duty in any place. Since the regiment left I have been a little lonely once or twice, but now am in good health and spirits.

I see by the papers that the regiment was expected in Chicago on the 24th inst. If they arrived I know they must have had a fine reception and a gay time. I received dear Mother's letter a few days since."

"In the Field near Dallas, Georgia, May 29, 1864.

Since we left Larkinsville nearly a month since, we have been on the march, or in the fight—with the exception of three days' rest at Kingston, after our fight of Dallas, and Resacca, the accounts of which you have received long before this will reach you. Our Div. and Brig. bore a prominent part in the fight at Resacca and lost but few men, our entire loss during the fight there—in our brigade was about 120 killed and wounded. A small loss for the work that we did. I have not time to go into particulars. We left Kingston on the 23d inst., and moved for Atlanta, skirmishing with the enemy most of the time until our arrival at this place, where we find Johnson strongly fortified, and also find that he is strongly opposed to our marching any farther toward Atlanta. We arrived here the 26th, and have had some hard fighting. The enemy has been driven from his first works on the left of our line, but holds his own on the right. His position on the right is very strong and our corps has not as yet charged the works, and I think they will not, for I think Sherman will make some of his strategic movements that will force Johnson to fall back. Last evening Hardee with his corps made a desperate charge on our corps to turn our right, but was repulsed with great slaughter. Our men fought like tigers. It was the first time since our corps was organized that they have had an opportunity of fighting behind breastworks, or rather having an opportunity of repulsing a charge. The old division won laurels for itself. It is stated by some that the enemy's loss during the charge on our corps was over 1500 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, principally

the two former. Before one regiment in our division, twenty-two dead rebels were seen after they retired to their works. The Rebs said they knew what troops they were fighting and dreaded to charge the old 15th A. C. Other troops may fight as well, but it has a reputation with the Rebs and they do not like to meet it. We are now about thirty miles from Atlanta, and I hope I shall be able to write my next letter from that place. We have perfect confidence in the ability of our favorite, Gen. Sherman. We have orders to move the train and I shall have to close."

"In the Field near Marietta, Ga., June 4, 1864.

It has been raining almost constantly for the last four days. All our soldiers have is their rubber blankets to shelter them, yet they bear it without a murmur. Johnson has selected a very strong position just this side of Marietta, and is well fortified. We are also in line, and have good works and have been here for three days. There is no heavy fighting—nothing but picket and skirmish fire. At the rate we have been driving Johnson we shall be in Atlanta by the first of July, and I believe we will. I hope to celebrate the 4th in that place with the stars and stripes floating in every direction. Our army is in good health and spirits, and have perfect confidence in the ability of the commanding officer, Gen'l McPherson and Logan also have the confidence of the men, and in fact all of our commanders are good fighting men. Gen. Giles A. Smith and staff are all right, yet the general has had two of his orderlies wounded. Little drummer boy Howe is one of them, (better known as 'Caliber 58,') but not severely. Col. Malmberg has been assigned to duty as Chief Engineer, with Gen. Blair. I hope to see him ere many days. I was over a few days since, and saw Capt. Bryant and Thereon Hurlbut, and several of the boys in the 74th. I also saw Col. Kerr who spoke of having made the acquaintance of my two sisters, and wished me to send his regards. The 74th is less than a quarter of a mile from us, but we have little opportunity for visiting. They are at the front and so is our brigade. I am up with the General, and have my two Head

Quarters wagons. The balance of my train is back. We have a good safe place for head quarters protected by a knoll from the bullets. We hear them whistling over our heads quite often, when there is a lively picket fire. I expect that ere this Mrs. Emma has started for her future home. I wish her a pleasant life and also prosperity."

"Acworth, Ga., June 8, 1864.

Since my last letter the Rebs have evacuated their works and retreated farther south, in the direction of Atlanta. It is generally supposed that they will make a stand at the river this side Atlanta. Gen. Blair and troops arrived here today. The General took dinner with us today. He is looking well, and I don't see that his fights in Congress have changed his appearance, or that he has lost in weight.

Col. Malmborg is with him as chief engineer. We have been looking for the regiment for several days but do not see them, or hear anything definite as to whereabouts. I shall look for letters by Henry when the regiment returns. I should have enjoyed myself had I gone home with the regiment, but I would not have missed this spring campaign for considerable, and I have saved quite a little sum of money that would have been spent if I had gone. Gen. Smith and all here are well and safe so far.

Since we have been here I have been quite busy closing up papers that have accumulated during the march."

"Near Kenesaw Mt., Ga., June 30th, 1864.

Up to the night of the 26th inst., our corps occupied a position in front of the eastern peak of Kenesaw Mountain, and had forced the enemy up well to its top. Our pickets were stationed over half way up from the base to the peak, but could not well advance any further up, as it was very steep and rugged and a barrier was the lines of Rebels which strongly contested. We here had held our position for several days. It was no place to make an advance and we were therefore ordered to be relieved,

and to march further to the right, relieving the 14th A. C., which we did during the night of the 26th and morning of the 27th. Very soon after relieving the 14th corps, we were ordered to form and assault the rebel works in our front. Before going farther I will give you a description of the ground over which our division had to pass. It was covered with timber and very thick underbrush, and vines, and our men had to pull the bushes one side and crawl between them in many places, which hindered them from advancing rapidly. The Rebel works were situated on a high hill (a spur of the mountain) commanding this advance. The division started from the works occupied by the 14th A. C. for the enemy's works which were nearly half a mile distant, and soon formed a heavy line of rebel skirmishers which were driven back into their works with but small loss on our side, but once in their works they were prepared for us as the main force had remained there. When our boys were near enough to make a charge they gave a cheer and started under one of the most terrific fires of musketry, and crossfires of batteries that man ever advanced against. It was too hot. They were obliged to fall back. Many were up to within thirty feet of the enemy's works. Captain Augustine of the 55th was killed very near their works while leading the men. Capt. Porter was also killed, and many good men of our division were killed or wounded in this fearful assault.

Co. C lost two men killed—H. Curtice and Crowell. The regiment lost three officers wounded and thirty-three men. Killed—eight men and two officers. The regiment held good its old reputation and did itself honor. Our brigade lost in killed and wounded about 157. Gen. Smith came out all right, and all the staff except Capt. Moore who was slightly wounded in the foot. The entire fight amounted to about this, that we lost about 500 men in the charging party and gained no particular advantage. It is reported that Gen. Schofield gained on the enemy and drove them on our right, and took some prisoners. On the night of the 27th our men were relieved and put in the reserve where we have been since."

“Head Quarters 1st Brigade, 2nd Div., 15th A. C. In the
Field below Marietta, Ga., July 5th, 1864.

Since I last wrote home the enemy have evacuated their strong position at Kenesaw and have fallen back changing their front. Now their lines run north and south, or nearly so. The right of our lines is nearly down to the Chattahoochee River. Marietta is in our possession, and our forces are far below it. The Army of the Tennessee has been changed from its position in the grand line and again occupies the right. I think that if the enemy retreats as fast as they have since the morning of the 3rd we shall soon be in Atlanta, and all hope it may soon be so.”

To his mother :

“July 14, 1864.

Because I am in the army you need not think that I am suffering—even away down here in Georgia. To satisfy you that I am not, I will give you our bill of fare for dinner today, which was no better than usual when we camp, or rather when we are not moving. Good beefsteak, potatoes, cabbage, good soft bread, peach jam, and peaches and cream. We have had for some time past, plenty of blackberries. Good doughnuts are not an uncommon thing with us. You will hardly think I am starving, will you? Since the 30th there has been but little hard fighting. Our armies have been very close to each other, but nothing but picket and skirmish firing has taken place. On the 8th Gen. Schofield crossed the river and captured a rebel general, and last night the Rebs crossed the river and evacuated very strong works. How long they will build strong works and evacuate them I know not, but it will be but few times more before we shall be in possession of Atlanta. In fact we can see the town from our lookout, very plainly, and it is only distant about ten miles. In a campaign of about three months, only five days of the time our division has been from under the range of the enemy's guns.”

"July 15, 1864.

"On the 2nd of July at 4 a. m. we moved to the extreme right, relieving one division of Gen. Schofield's command. The day was very hot and we marched fast, arriving at our position at 11 o'clock a. m., having marched thirteen miles. Upon relieving the division we found that they had good works, and after throwing out pickets, the boys rested during the heat, and at night they enjoyed a good rest as the nights are very cool here, though the days are hot enough. In the morning our brigade sent out a small force to see if the enemy was in force in front, or merely scouting parties and pickets. They found them in force after a short march and returned. While they were away we heard of the evacuation of Kenesaw Mt. As our troops were nearly in the rear of it and almost to Chattahoochee River we could not surround them. Johnson is too good a general to allow himself to be caught in a trap, and his army is most too large, and too strongly fortified to accomplish anything of the Vicksburg kind. We moved to Marietta, and from there to the Chattahoochee River at Rossville. Left camp at 4 p. m. the 12th, arriving within two and a half miles of Marietta that night at 12, having marched 13 miles. At 4 a. m. we were again on the move, passing through Marietta and taking the Rossville and Marietta road. At 10 o'clock our division halted and rested during the heat of the day. At 4 p. m. we were again on the move and encamped near Rossville. The men were very tired, having been up and marching nearly all the night before. At 3 p. m. the 14th again resumed our march, crossing the river and we are now in camp near its southern bank. We are on the extreme left. No enemy is in our immediate front. There are rumors that the Rebs have fallen back below Atlanta, but it is much doubted. It is very hot weather for an active campaign in this country."

"Near Atlanta, Ga., July 30th, 1864.

Gen. Thomas' army occupied the right, Schofield the center, and McPherson the left on the 22nd inst. and up to the 27th. Our army (of the Tenn.) left the Chattahoochee River and

marched to a point on the R. R. a little above Decatur, destroying the road. We then marched for Decatur, a small town situated six miles from Atlanta, arriving there on the 19th. The next morning at 3 a. m. our army was again on the advance following near the R. R. towards Atlanta. We had light skirmishing until we had advanced to within three miles of Atlanta where we found the enemy strongly fortified. The troops were halted and immediately went into position in the following order: The 15th A. C. occupying the right and joining with Schofield. The 17th in the center, and 16th on the left. Our men were soon at work throwing up works, and were ready for the rebels to charge us and wanted them to try to take the R. R. One division was in position on each side of the R. R.

On the night of the 21st the Rebels evacuated their works in our front, and fell back about three-quarters of a mile to another line which was stronger, and without doubt they had a purpose in so doing, for we had but just occupied their works, and commenced changing their front, when they made a desperate attack on the left of the 17th A. C. (Gen. Giles Smith's division) and on the right of the 16th A. C. There was a small gap between the 17th and 16th corps which was not covered by a line of works. Here the Rebels threw in troops and also in front, making one of the most desperate assaults of the war. Our men held them for a long time, and dealt leaden hail with fearful havoc, repulsing them again, and again, and they reforming. Our men were finally obliged to fall back a little but soon formed a new line and held the enemy. At night the Rebels retired leaving their dead and wounded on the field.

At 3 o'clock that afternoon Hood's old corps massed in front of our division and made a most determined assault. We had two regiments out in advance of our main line of works, which fought them as long as they could, and then fell back to the main line after inflicting severe loss to the enemy, and having lost heavily themselves. The enemy came in four lines deep, and in the finest of order. Our men opened on them a

most terrible fire from both artillery and musketry, but still they came closer and closer. At first their line was broken, but the smoke from our artillery so shielded them from our men that they soon formed and massed a heavy force in one part of the line, and were so close upon a portion of the 2nd Brigade that the line broke, and our men were obliged to fall back. The 55th Ill. and an Ohio regiment kept up a heavy fire until they were nearly surrounded, and then they fell back, fighting all the time. I should have mentioned that during the fight on the 17th corps, and soon after the attack there were four regiments of our Div. sent to reinforce them, and were there. When the fight commenced in our front, they were ordered to return to the division on double quick, but they did not arrive until our men had fallen back. As they came up on the 'double quick,' with a loud cheer the men formed and charged the Rebels, but were repulsed. They very soon again formed and charged again, this time driving the Rebels and retaking six of the ten cannon which we had lost but a short time before. We also took a large number of prisoners and drove the enemy from the field in such haste that they had to leave their dead and wounded on the field. It was one of the bloodiest fights that our division was ever in. Our loss was about 600 in killed, wounded and missing, principally the latter. This fight was made principally in front of our division. Our loss was heavy, but nothing to that of the enemy. They have acknowledged a loss of 14,000. We were victorious, but many of our best men fell to rise no more. We mourn the loss of our much loved and respected commander, Maj. Gen. McPherson. He always had a smile and a kind word for those around him. In him we have lost a true soldier, a perfect gentleman, and an able commander. His memory will be cherished by all until their last hour shall come. Our loss in the Army of the Tennessee on the 22nd was about 3500, and we occupied that night the same ground that we advanced to in the morning, and did until the morning of the 27th, having no fighting more than picket firing. Our works were made very strong the night of the 22nd and the boys heartily wished they

would again charge us, but they concluded that discretion was the better part of valor and did not come.

The evening of the 26th we received orders to withdraw from our position quietly during the night and then to march to the right of the entire army. The 16th A. C. commenced moving about sundown, and about 3 a. m. our division moved and was the last to withdraw. We marched a short distance and halted until 4 p. m. when we again resumed our march. The 16th and 17th corps were ahead of us and got into position about nine that night. Our corps arrived about 11 and rested for the night near the position which they were to occupy. At 3 o'clock the next morning they advanced to their position (skirmishing with the enemy) which was a strong one. They had but fairly reached the top of the hill and thrown up a few logs and rails when the enemy were found to be advancing on the 15th A. C. in heavy columns. It was now 12 o'clock. They came on in fine order, and our men let them get within easy range and then fired *such* volleys they cannot be described. They were repulsed with a heavy loss, but they soon formed and came again, without doubt expecting to drive us. The fighting was desperate, but our boys again repulsed them, and thus they fought for four long hours, our boys repulsing them each time with great loss to them. There were two corps of the Rebels. The first made three distinct charges and then the 2nd came up and relieved them, and made the most desperate charge of all, but they could not make our lines falter in a single place. Our boys stood up nobly to the work, and the *old corps* has everlasting honors. The battle was grand; the continuous roar of musketry for four hours, and knowing that our men were holding the enemy during all their fine charges was enough to make a man feel proud to say that he belonged to the old 15th corps, and more than this, to know that one small corps repulsed two corps of the best troops in the Confederate army, and that with small loss to ourselves, although we might say it was a fair open field fight, for our works amounted to but little. The loss in our brigade is 7 killed and 56 wounded, and that of the 2nd

brigade about the same. How they thus escaped is almost a miracle. Our Div. was in the hottest of the fight. Only 3 killed in the 55th and two of this number are of Co. C—John Q. A. Curtiss of Durand, and Oscar Johnson of Burritt. The enemy's loss has been estimated at 10,000 which may be too large, but our division buried about 325 rebel dead in our front, and other divisions must have buried at least that number, and there is little doubt but that they took off a good many dead when they left the field. We also took in quite a number of rebel wounded. It is always estimated that there are five wounded to every one killed. The enemy fell back and our men advanced and took a new position. Yesterday we were in reserve, but today we advanced and have a fine line of works and expect that by tomorrow we will have another fight. Our lines are less than two miles of Atlanta and we hope to soon have it, but it may be some time, and we expect hard fighting before we get there.

We are in good spirits, and we have plenty of supplies. At the rate we have been lessening their army for the last ten days, I think it will not be very long before it will be quite small, and so worn out and demoralized by fatigue and defeat, that it will take a long time to organize another such an army as they had. I will now close, dear sister, hoping that I have written something of interest. I was near one of our batteries where I could see a good deal of the fighting and am all right although a shell and solid shot came around us occasionally. I saw Capt. Bryant a few days since. He was well and so was Theron.

You must remember that this letter was written in one evening, and that I have written hurriedly, and have not time to correct the mistakes that may be in it."

"Head Quarters 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, 15th A. C.

In the Field near Atlanta, Aug. 3rd, 1864.

I find by your letter that you have been celebrating the capture of Atlanta. I am sorry to disappoint you in your expecta-

tions, but Atlanta is still in the possession of the Rebels and may be for several days. It may be two days or two weeks, but its fall is inevitable and none will be sorry when that happy day arrives, and this campaign is ended, and our tired army may have a little rest. When we take into consideration the magnitude of our army, and the amount of fighting and the hardships that all have passed through, I myself would not have missed the pleasure and pride (should my life be spared) of having at some future day the name and honor of having borne a part in this, the greatest and grandest campaign of the *Western Army*. I am proud to say that I have not in nearly three years missed a single march, and have been in *my place* during every fight, or there may be an exception—a little too near the front at times for a Q. M., I have been told so often, and I shall ever try to be ready for my duty, and in all places where duty calls—but enough. Keep up good spirits dear Mother. I am living in hopes that we shall see different times some day.

I am much pleased that Durand has enterprise enough to get for itself a cannon so that it and the surrounding country may know when we have gained a victory. I know that all at home who have friends in the army feel great anxiety for their safety when they hear of a battle. My position is such that I am not as much exposed as many, and therefore you need not be so anxious for me. I am not saying but that I am exposed to some extent at times. When my *duty* calls me I go whether the bullets are flying thick, or whether none of them are singing. When the fight commenced on the 22nd inst. I had our Hd. Qrs. established within a very short distance of our works, and before I could have them loaded and move out, the shells were bursting all around, and bullets whistling, yet none of my men were hurt nor thy soldier boy. You were right when you think the enemy have a particular spite against the 15th A. C. or, I may say that we have been in positions that they were most anxious to have, therefore we have borne the brunt of several hard fights."

"Head Quarters 1st Brigade 2nd Div. 15th A. C.

In the field near Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 10, 1864.

We have been gradually advancing our lines, and they are now within a short distance of the main works of the enemy. They fight with desperation and will hold Atlanta just as long as they possibly can, which is in my opinion just what Sherman wishes them to do. Maj. Gen. Howard has been assigned to the command of the Army of the Tenn. He without doubt is an excellent general, but it will be some time before he has the love and esteem of the troops that our lamented and loved McPherson had. I think our troops have perfect confidence in his ability. We have had a change in our brigade commander, Col. Jones of the 30th Ohio Vet. Vols. is now in command. He is an officer of great experience, and is well liked by all. I find him very pleasant. I enclose his photograph which please place with the others. Several changes have taken place in the brigade. I am still in my old position and think I shall remain. I have had offers of places where I should have it easier, but I prefer staying with the old brigade. I am all right and waiting anxiously for this *long* campaign to close. I cannot see that this war has any prospect of closing by the 31st of October, and if I live up to the resolve that I made when I entered the service nearly three years ago, I shall not leave it till this war has closed, but I have come to the conclusion that if the government wants my services, it can afford to give me a good position.

I have another photograph which I will enclose—of a friend—Capt. Frank De Gress. He is the captain who has gained such great notoriety as an artillery officer, and is said to have the best battery in the Western Army."

"August 14, 1864.

Dear Sister: It is Sabbath evening and I have been sitting before my tent, thinking of days gone by and comparing the Sabbath evenings in the army with those we used to spend together on the old farm. Those were happy days. Then none of us knew what the cares and trouble of life were. We enjoyed

real happiness. Here in the army we seldom know when Sunday comes, and if we do the probabilities are that our duties are greater than on other days. Yet for all, there is a fascination about the life of a soldier that captivates. But Sister, one thing is certain, that the strong affection which exists for Father, Mother, brothers and sisters with us will last, though we will necessarily be apart more or less hereafter.

You may think that I am a little homesick, but I assure you that I am not. I am enjoying myself and doing to the best of my ability what I feel to be my duty to my country, my friends, and my God."

"August 21st, 1864.

I send you two photos of friends of mine. One is one of my nearest friends, Capt. Andruss.

I find that you do not fully understand the position I now hold, and I will explain to you so that you may fully understand. Regimental quarter masters are merely disbursing officers of *property*, and have no monies of the government. The position of captain and Asst. Q. M. is an appointment made by the President, and a bond is required. The principal difference between this position and mine is that in the former public money is disbursed, and bonds required. Bonds are in proportion to rank and pay. I was mistaken in regard to the amount of the bond required for a captain and a Q. M. It is only \$10,000. I have a prospect of a position that will suit me better. It is of the same rank and pay, and bonds also are required. I have friends in the army who will help me, some of whom wear stars."

"East Point, Ga., Sept. 11, 1864.

At last I have found a few moments to write. It has been some time since I have been able to write to you, on account of pressing business since our arrival at this place from the late movement on the Atlanta and Macon R. R. which caused the fall of Atlanta. The particulars I hope to be able to give you in

a future letter. This time I will be obliged to write a short letter as I am very tired.

Atlanta has been ours for some time and the enemy is greatly demoralized. I have not as yet been into Atlanta although we are encamped within four miles of its. I expect to go as soon as I have the brigade well supplied."

"East Point, Ga., Sept. 16, 1864.

East Point is situated at the junction of the Montgomery & Atlanta, and Mobile & A. railroads, and this is all you can say for it. There is no town, but it is a fine healthy location, plenty of shade, and good water. Our Hd. Qrs. are in a very pleasant location in a grove. Our tents are nicely floored and I have the exquisite pleasure of sleeping between clean white sheets each night. In front of our tent we have a bower of green pine boughs. Col. Jones is a very pleasant man to be with. Mother, I have been very fortunate since I came into the army, and I know well it is because I do my duty, and without a murmur.

There was considerable anxiety while the Chicago convention was in session, as to who its nominee would be, and what kind of a platform it would adopt.

The army now understands the party and the principles they advocate, and if 'Old Abe' enforces the draft and brings men into the field—fills up our vacant ranks, he will surely be the next president. This seems to be the prevailing sentiment."

"East Point, October 1, 1864.

I am expecting a letter the first mail. When that will come, I know not, as our mails have been very irregular lately, owing to the malicious designs of a 'Mr. Wheeler' who is trying to cut off our communications occasionally. We are all right, and with such a man as our able commander, W. T. Sherman, we trust our all, at all times, and in all places.

I thank you for the compliment to the old 15th A. C. In the last fight we had, (Jonesboro,) our division bore the brunt

of the fight, repulsing many assaults in handsome style, and with little loss to us. It was the first fight that our present commander, Col. Theo. Jones, had taken the brigade into, and he handled it splendidly. What I mean by the first fight is that it was the first fight aside from siege fighting behind works. 'Old Abe' will be elected. Illinois will not give her soldiers the opportunity of voting, but there are states that do, and the vote of the army will be overwhelmingly for 'Old Abe.' A large proportion feel that he can put down this rebellion much better than any other man, and none are for peace with armed rebels."

"In the Field, Alabama, Oct. 21st, 1864.

You are without doubt very anxious about us and our movements. We are all right and are doing some fine marching. When I have time I will give particulars. Louise, you can give my best wishes to Mrs. Fletcher, and I wish her much joy and happiness in her new life. Also congratulate A. H. B. for me. Give my kindest regards to Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. Has Aunt Ann recovered from her late sickness?"

(He speaks in one letter of "Aunt Mary" visiting at home, and they being her only near relatives. I do not know who she is.)

"Near Marietta, Ga., Nov. 5th, 1864.

We have been for the last month on active duty in the field, a portion of the time in pursuit of Hood and army, but lately on our return to Atlanta—or at least we suppose that we shall go there; not however to stop there, for we trust a brilliant campaign is about to take place. And now comes the question, 'Are you going to stay and participate in it after your time has expired, or are you coming home?' I hardly know what to answer you, for it is very uncertain. I have not yet fully made up my mind."

"Near Marietta, Ga., Nov. 8, 1864.

The troops are now being paid and clothed preparatory to a long and we trust successful campaign. When we shall start has not yet been announced but it is understood that after

tomorrow we shall have no opportunity of sending mail north for some time; and the probabilities are that when you next hear from us we shall have a new line of communication, and one which will not be often interrupted. Hood in his late raid did us little harm, but forced us to make a march through the northern part of Georgia, and I think that the army have all enjoyed it well, as we found plenty of foraging, and made." (Mistake in copying—sentence not finished.) "You speak in your letter of it having been a month since you had heard from me when you received my letter of September 30th. I think myself much favored lately if I receive a letter once a month, and do not feel it so much of late as I used to. Not dear Sis, that I am not just as anxious to hear from you, but that I am learning to put up with disappointment better. This has been a great day, and its results are of greater importance than that of any other election since this country declared its independence of Great Britain. We are not well posted as to the present feeling and politics of those at home, and probably not competent judges, but we have confidence that today has shown to the *peace men* of the North, and to foreign nations, that this government will sustain itself. I have received my pay up to Oct. 31st, but have no opportunity of sending it home at present, and as I have it in .07 30/100 coupon notes, and in a safe place, I am not so particular about sending it just now. I am very anxious for the next campaign. Many surmise that our destination will be Savannah, Ga., distant from here about 280 miles. Please send me a dollar's worth of stamps."

"In Camp at White Hall, Ogeechee River, Ga.,
December 17, 1864.

Once more I have the pleasure of writing a letter home. It has been a long time since I have had the pleasure. On Nov. 15th the army of Gen. Sherman left Atlanta, having broken loose from all communications with the North. We marched through the central part of Georgia and the heart of the Confederacy for the coast, there to establish a base, from which to supply the army, with less line of communication to guard.

This without doubt was one of the principal objects of the campaign. It has been accomplished and now the grand army has the safe Atlantic, instead of a slender line of R. R. for our supplies to come over. But this is not all we have accomplished; the Confederacy is again cut in twain, all railroads having been thoroughly destroyed connecting western Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama with the East. The country through which we passed for a breadth of sixty miles, from Atlanta to the coast will be found to have little upon which either man or beast can subsist. In fact, the march has been the greatest blow to the Confederacy that has yet been struck. Private buildings have not been destroyed, but all public buildings that could be of any use to the Confederacy have been burned. In the line of provisions, there was plenty of meat, meal, sweet potatoes, chickens, turkeys, etc., etc. The army has accomplished much, but more yet remains to be done. We arrived in the rear of Savannah about a week since, and operations have commenced that will bring its downfall. The 2nd Div. 15th A. C. had the honor of opening the line of communication with the Atlantic fleet, by storming and capturing one of the strongest forts for its size, in the south. The cheers echoed for miles around when the news was made known to the army (which was distant about eight miles,) that the 2nd Div. had taken Fort McAllister, and that the 'Cracker line' was then open.

For a description of the fight I will refer you to the N. Y. Tribune. The date that it will appear, I am not able to tell, but I know that you will find a good description as the correspondent of that paper was present with the Division, and he is a fine writer. I shall look for letters tomorrow. There were about 300 sacks of mail for Sherman's army there for us but the mail is so large that it has taken a long time to distribute it. The last date that I have from home is Oct. 23rd, nearly two months ago. Who knows what has taken place in that time? The mail bags still hold the secret."

"Q. M. Office, 1st Brigade, 2nd Div. 15th A. C.
Savannah, Ga., Jan. 14, 1865.

Since I last wrote there has little transpired excepting the visit from Washington of the Q. M. General, Secretary of War, and the Asst. Adjutant General of the Army of the U. S.

During their stay several promotions were made. Among the number is our able Division commander, Gen. Hazen. He is now a Major General. My old commander, Gen. Giles A. Smith, I understand, has been brevetted Maj. Gen. Who thought when over three years since, I entered the service a private that I should ever be a staff officer of a Maj. Gen.? Not I. But such has been my fortune. Gen. Hazen has taken great interest in my promotion, and if the best of recommendations will bring my appointment I am sure of it; but it sometimes requires a little political influence. Will I not be proud to show you a commission issued by the President?

Our Division moved today to Thunderbolt, four miles below the city, and will embark tomorrow or next day for Beaufort, S. C. I shall move my train tomorrow. Perhaps you would like to know how many teams I have. A little over 200 in all. About 1200 horses and mules, and this is but little compared with the train of our army."

"Savannah, Ga., Jan. 21, 1865.

Having an opportunity of sending North by Capt. Voges A. Q. M., I gladly improve it, and enclosed you will find \$300 in .07 30/100 bonds. Please place them with balance of my money. I am well, and wanting to start on another campaign.

The Division is now at Beaufort, and I am here at Savannah with two regiments and my train. I expect to move every day. The weather is wet and rainy and I am afraid our next campaign will be a wet one."

"In the Field, S. C., Feb. 4, 1865.

The army covered its movement from Beaufort and vicinity on the 29th inst., and moved to the interior of S. C. We are taking a large amount of supplies with us in the way of rations.

and the prospects are we shall find plenty in the county through which we pass. Where our destination is, none of us can tell, as 'Uncle Billy' keeps such things pretty well to himself. We have had some skirmishing with the enemy, but have driven them before us without trouble. My duties now are very hard. I have been told by officers who should know, that my appointment is on its way from Washington. I have acted in the capacity of A. Q. M. about long enough and feel that I am entitled to the rank and pay."

At Fayetteville, N. C., March 12th. (Hopes the campaign will be ended soon.)

"Fayetteville, N. C., March 13th, 1865.

The campaign has so far been a grand success, and the people of the Confederacy are beginning to believe that they cannot hold out much longer, if Sherman continues his mode of campaigning. Since we left Beaufort, S. C., Jan. 30th, up to the present time, we have been slowly making progress through the enemy's country, destroying all communications, consuming supplies, and destroying their public buildings and works. I sincerely think that there is not much left along our line of march through S. C. We have passed through some of their prominent R. R. towns destroying portions of them. Columbia, the capital of the state, was nearly destroyed. I think however, that it was not the intention of Gen. Sherman to destroy it, but soon after the first fire broke out, one of the most terrific gales that we have had for a long time helped to sweep every thing before it. Many families were burned out of house and home. A large number came with us, and will leave this place today or tomorrow on their way north. One family has been staying and marching with me. They are a very nice family, and I have made everything as comfortable for them as it was possible for me to do. I feel that it is doing as I would wish to be done by. How are you all getting along at home? I am almost afraid to open the next letter for fear that it will contain some sad news. How do I know that you are all now living?"

"Near Goldsboro, N. C., March 22, 1865.

Q. M. Office, 2nd Div., 15th A. C.

Again do I avail myself of an opportunity to write a few lines. I hope you will excuse short letters until we get into camp where we shall have better facilities, and I hope more time to write. Since I wrote from Fayetteville we have marched over seventy miles, over a poor country, and the worst roads that I have seen since my entry into the service. We have had some hard fighting and have gained our point as we always do. We have now in our possession Goldsboro, a town of about 3,000 inhabitants before the war. It is at the junction of the Weldon and Wilmington, and the Newbern & N. C. railroads, and near the Neuse River. It was very important to the enemy, and also to ourselves. It will probably be the base of supplies for the army of Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman, where it will probably be fitted out for another campaign. This army will not—in my opinion—have much rest until 'this cruel war is over.' I do not see how the Confederacy can stand many more such campaigns as the one through Georgia, and the one through South and North Carolinas. The fighting at this place has been done principally by the 14th A. C. and our corps. I would like to go into particulars and give you an idea of the importance of the campaign, but want of time, and fatigue, will not admit. I have enjoyed good health during the entire campaign and have had plenty of work to do—enough to keep me out of mischief. I will close, hoping soon to receive a mail with several letters from my dear friends at home."

"Goldsboro, N. C., March 27, 1865.

Dear Sister C.: Last evening I received Mother's letter of Feb. 22nd, and this morning I received yours of the 12th. I had feared to open the first letter after so long a time of suspense. You no doubt have been very anxious to learn how this last campaign of ours was going to terminate, and in fact so was the army. All felt that when our able commander, Sherman, started for any point, he was sure to defeat the enemy opposing him. From the time we left Beaufort, S. C., Jan. 29th,

until we arrived at Fayetteville, N. C., we knew nothing of our destination nor could we guess. We have destroyed the railroads through S. C., and supplies for the Confederate army. A portion of N. C. has fallen into our hands, and has been treated in the same manner. Our campaign has caused the evacuation of the two most important towns in the South, Charleston and Wilmington. Our marches have been each day, and during the rainy season, such roads I have never seen. The country has generally been poor. I have had the pleasure of being complimented by men in high places, for efficiency in getting my large train through bad roads and the general management of it and my department during the entire campaign. This of course is pleasing to me and also to my friends. My train numbers in all about 160 wagons, and I have charge of, during a march, over 240. Something to do is there not? When on a campaign I have the easiest time. Now that we are in camp, work in such abundance stares me in the face, that I hardly know what to commence first. I have to fully equip the men of the division with clothing and camp equipage, and refit all the transportation, and there are many minor things besides making up papers for the last three months which are back. One thing I have to console me, I have a sufficient corps of help to do it all, and I shall merely have to oversee their work. I have under my command about 300 men in different positions. Would you have thought, Sis, when your brother left home over three years ago, a private of Co. C that he would ever have such responsible duties to perform? Tell Frank that a cousinly letter from her will be answered, also give my best regards to 'Squire and Mrs. Campbell.

Later. We are now in camp at Goldsboro, very busily engaged in procuring supplies, and refitting the army with clothing, etc. My camp is in a fine location. My own tent—office, and store tent, are pitched in a beautiful pine grove, and I am as comfortably situated as one can well be. O, "by the by," you have a photo of one of my old friends, taken at Chicago in '61. He was then Q. M. Sergt. of the old 55th, C. R. Sanders.

He is now with me as Chief Clerk, and a fine fellow he is, I assure you. Sister, in case I can have the pictures taken of the Q. M. and assistants of the 2nd Div. while we are here, I intend to do it and will send it to you at home to keep for me, and also to see what an intelligent lot of men are with the Q. M., your brother. I guess Sis, by this time you are tired. How are my old acquaintances and the Partch boys, and last but not least, Deak Webster, getting along? How is Henry? And ask him why he does not write to me and let me know how the experiences of courtship compare with those of soldiering. Remember me to all my lady friends (if I have any) and with much love to Father, Mother, Josey, Ernie, Louise and yourself, I remain your affectionate brother,

Thad."

"Goldsboro, April 9th, 1865.

We are greatly rejoiced at the success of our great General Grant. At the news of Richmond being taken, this army went nearly crazy. Cheer after cheer was given for Grant and his army. I have never seen as great rejoicing in the army as this has been, and we have good reason to rejoice. The stronghold of the Confederacy is ours, and the end we hope is drawing near. Tomorrow the army of Gen. Sherman leaves on its next campaign, which I hope will be short and decisive. Where we are to go is not known, but I think in all probability you may hear from us at Raleigh, or in that vicinity. In case we strike the retreating and demoralized army of Lee, I think we will give them a taste of the fighting qualities of the 'western boys in blue.'

To give you an idea of the amount of work I have done in repairing transportation, I will merely state that I have kept 25 mechanics busy at work all the time by day, and some by night, and you can judge what they can turn out in twelve days. The army has not been in as good condition to move, since we left Larkinsville, almost as year ago, as it is now. The health of the troops is excellent and they are in fine spirits ready for anything which 'Uncle Billy' may wish of U. S."

"Louisville, Ky., June 8th, 1865.

Since leaving Raleigh the business in my department has been very great, and at Washington I received orders to turn over all my transportation, tools, etc. Having a large amount of property of this kind, my time was occupied in disposing of the same, in order to be ready to move with the Division to this place. I did it all but did not find time to write letters. We left Washington on the 2nd inst. and arrived at this place yesterday. The 15th A. C. are encamped about two miles east of the city, near the Ohio River. Our trip through from Washington was very pleasant. The weather was fine, and even Nature seemed to welcome us on our return northward."

"Louisville, Ky., Headquarters 2nd Div.

15th A. C., June 18, 1865.

I have the honor to inform you that I have at last received my papers from Washington. Dear Mother, your son is a Major in the United States Army. Is it good news? In one of your letters you said the dark hour was just before the day, but my opinion is that my dark hours were many. I hope that I am now seeing the glories of approaching light. But enough—I promised in my last letter to try and be home the 4th of July. I am very sorry to say that I am disappointed in not being able to see you at home at that time, and am very sorry that I am obliged to disappoint you. We have received orders to move to Little Rock, Ark., as soon as paid, which will be the latter part of this week. I have the promise as soon as the Division is fairly settled in camp, at or near that place, that I can visit my home. I shall try to be with you for several days. I have been enjoying myself very well since we came to this place. Have become acquainted with several ladies, and spent several evenings very pleasantly with them."

"June 28th, 1865.

The Division is now on its way to Little Rock, Ark. We left Louisville on the 26th inst. I promised Josey a present when at home. I send him by Sergt. Wright a present which I

hope he will like. He must be a little careful until he gets used to the habits of the animal. If Sergt. Wright does not bring a saddle for the donkey I wish you would have a saddle and bridle made. Hoping that the present will suit Josey, and that he will enjoy riding it, I will close, hoping to be with you in August or September."

"Little Rock, Ark., July 22nd, 1865.

We are still encamped at this place, but expect to move in a few days. It is not yet decided where we shall go; it will either be Pine Bluff or Camden. The Division will probably be scattered over the state and Head Quarters at one or the other of the above named places."

(He came to Durand in August, and brought two clerks to work upon papers. He did not return to the army.)

NOTE.—After Major Thaddeus H. Capron was mustered out of the service of the United States, October 31, 1865, after more than four years service during the Civil War, 1861–1865, he remained at home for about a year. He entered the Regular Army, January 22, 1867, as a second lieutenant in the 9th United States Infantry, and gave his country twenty years of military service. He became a first lieutenant November 8, 1871, and retired from service, on account of failing health, August 30, 1887. He died December 24, 1890.

Lieutenant Capron was stationed at Fort Laramie at the time of the Custer Massacre, and was in the battle near the Rosebud Agency.

When Lieutenant Capron was married he took his bride, who was Cynthia Steves, from the Illinois home to New York and they went by boat with troops to the Isthmus of Panama. From the Isthmus they sailed for San Francisco, where Lieutenant Capron was stationed on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay.

Later the young officer was ordered to Camp Wright in the mountains, where on the first anniversary of their marriage

a son was born to them. When the young wife and mother made her first visit home, the railroad was completed, and it was not necessary for her to make the long and tedious trip by water. Mrs. Capron kept a most interesting diary of her experiences as an army wife. It is expected that parts of it will be published in a future number of the Journal.

Among the Soldiers spoken of in the Diary may be mentioned:

Captain Rhenodyne A. Bird, commissioned Oct. 31, 1861. Resigned June 6, 1862.

Captain Robert Oliver, enlisted as Corporal, Sept. 9, 1861. Promoted Sergeant, First Sergeant, First Lieutenant, Nov. 26, 1862. Promoted Captain, Aug. 11, 1864. Mustered out Aug. 24, 1865.

First Lieutenant Daniel McIntosh, commissioned Oct. 31, 1861. Mustered out Nov. 26, 1862.

First Lieutenant Luther J. Keyes, enlisted as Corporal Sept. 9, 1861. Re-enlisted as veteran, March 31, 1864. Promoted First Sergeant, then First Lieutenant, Aug. 11, 1864. Mustered out Aug. 14, 1865.

First Sergeant Ambrose C. Partch, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861. Discharged Aug. 25, 1862. Wounds.

Sergeant Theodore W. Hodges, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861.

Sergeant John Shields, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861.

Sergeant A. H. Bowen, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861, discharged Jan. 28, 1863, disabled.

Corporal Orville H. Partch, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861.

Corporal William H. Speaker, enlisted Sept. 6, 1861, died at St. Louis, Jan. 11, 1862.

Corporal John Q. A. Curtis, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861. Re-enlisted as veteran, Jan. 1, 1864. Killed July 28, 1864.

Corporal Daniel Shields, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861, discharged Feb. 10, 1863, disabled.

Corporal C. N. Bowen, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861.

Corporal H. T. Hickox, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861, re-enlisted as veteran.

Musician H. H. Porter, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861.

Musician H. A. Hurlbut, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861. Promoted Commissary Sergeant.